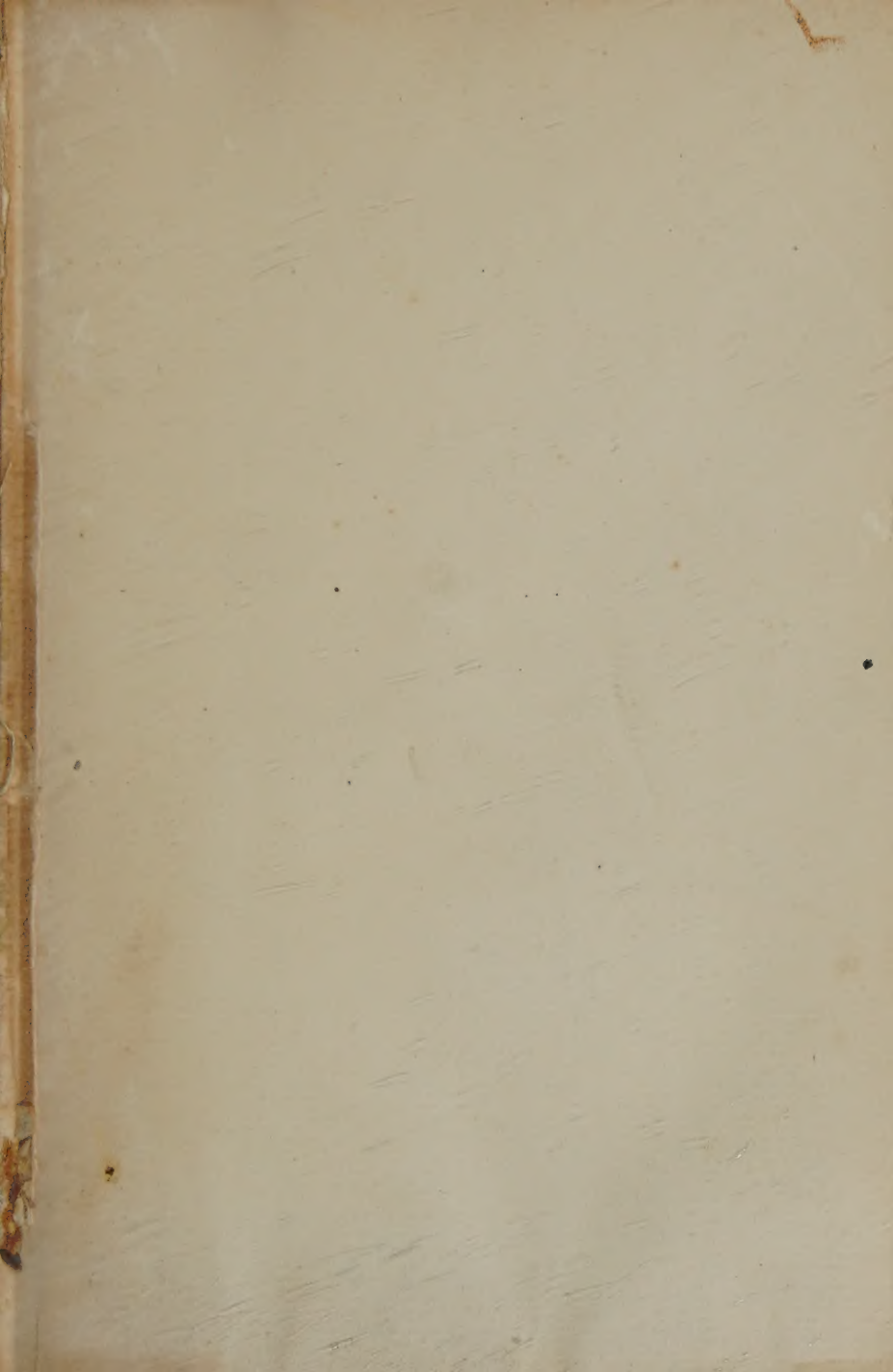
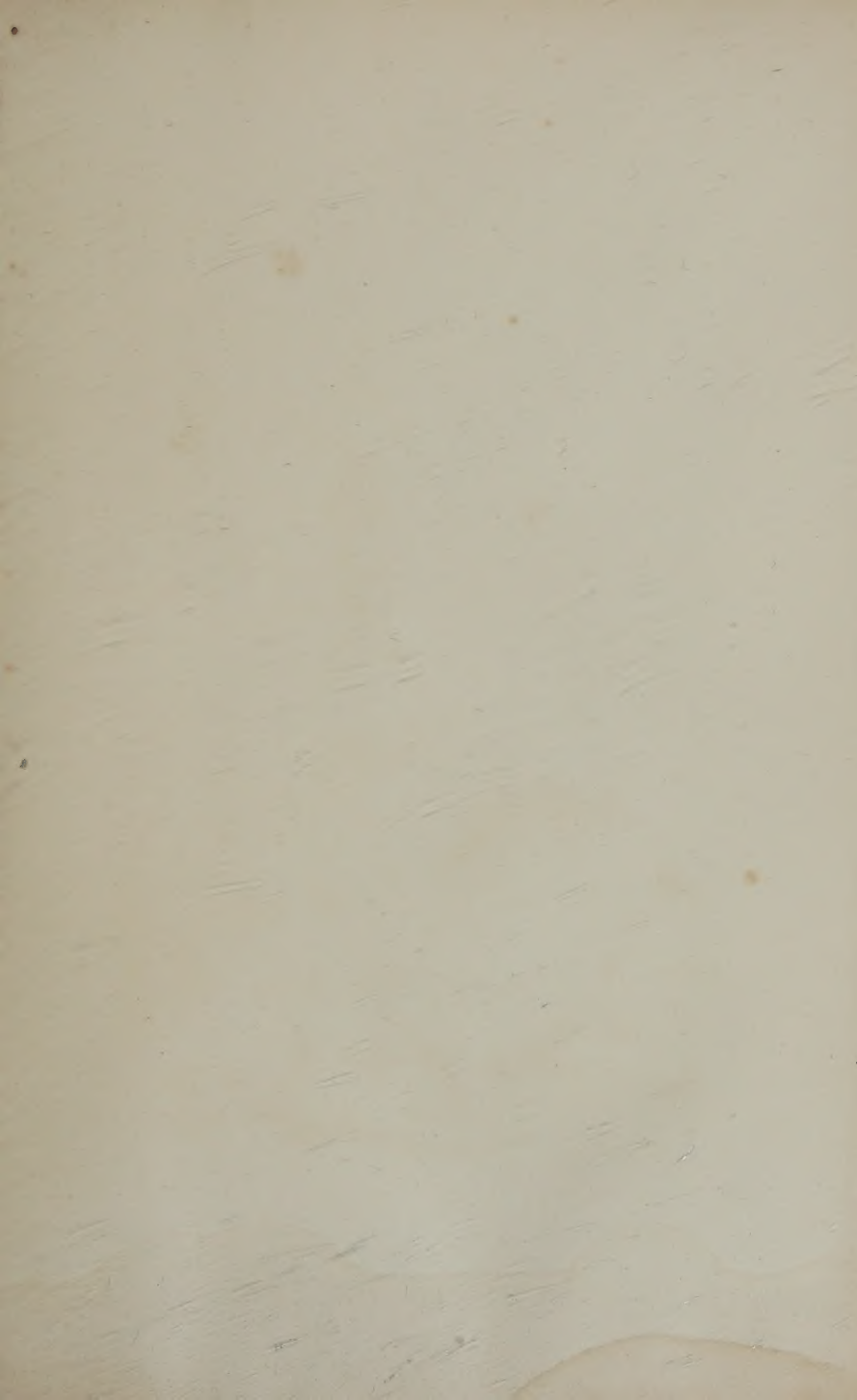






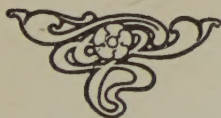


The Idyll and the Epic.

Photogravure, from a drawing by E. Bayard.

THE WORKS
OF
VICTOR HUGO

LES MISÉRABLES
VOLUME II



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TRANSLATED BY
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LES MISÉRABLES.

Saint-Denis.

THE IDYL IN THE RUE PLUMET AND THE EPIC IN THE RUE
SAINT-DENIS.

BOOK FIRST.—A FEW PAGES OF HISTORY.

I. — WELL CUT.

1831 and 1832, the two years which are immediately connected with the Revolution of July, form one of the most peculiar and striking moments of history. These two years rise like two mountains midway between those which precede and those which follow them. They have a revolutionary grandeur. Precipices are to be distinguished there. The social masses, the very assizes of civilization, the solid group of superposed and adhering interests, the century-old profiles of the ancient French formation, appear and disappear in them every instant, athwart the storm clouds of systems, of passions, and of theories. These appearances and disappearances have been designated as movement and resistance. At intervals, truth, that daylight of the human soul, can be descried shining there.

This remarkable epoch is decidedly circumscribed and is beginning to be sufficiently distant from us to allow of our grasping the principal lines even at the present day.

We shall make the attempt.

The Restoration had been one of those intermediate phases, hard to define, in which there is fatigue, buzzing, murmurs, sleep, tumult, and which are nothing else than the arrival of a great nation at a halting-place.

These epochs are peculiar and mislead the politicians who desire to convert them to profit. In the beginning, the nation asks nothing but repose; it thirsts for but one thing, peace; it has but one ambition, to be small. Which is the translation of remaining tranquil. Of great events, great hazards, great adventures, great men, thank God, we have seen enough, we have

them heaped higher than our heads. We would exchange Cæsar for Prusias, and Napoleon for the King of Yvetot. "What a good little king was he!" We have marched since Jaybreak, we have reached the evening of a long and toilsome day; we made our first change with Mirabeau, the second with Robespierre, the third with Bonaparte; we are worn out. Each one demands a bed.

Devotion which is weary, heroism which has grown old, ambitions which are sated, fortunes which are made, seek, demand, implore, solicit, what? A shelter. They have it. They take possession of peace, of tranquillity, of leisure; behold, they are content. But, at the same time certain facts arise, compel recognition, and knock at the door in their turn. These facts are the products of revolutions and wars, they are, they exist, they have the right to install themselves in society, and they do install themselves therein; and most of the time, facts are the stewards of the household and fouriers¹ who do nothing but prepare lodgings for principles.

This, then, is what appears to philosophical politicians:—

At the same time that weary men demand repose, accomplished facts demand guarantees. Guarantees are the same to facts that repose is to men.

This is what England demanded of the Stuarts after the Protector; this is what France demanded of the Bourbons after the Empire.

These guarantees are a necessity of the times. They must be accorded. Princes "grant" them, but in reality, it is the force of things which gives them. A profound truth, and one useful to know, which the Stuarts did not suspect in 1662, and which the Bourbons did not even obtain a glimpse of in 1814.

The predestined family, which returned to France when Napoleon fell, had the fatal simplicity to believe that it was itself which bestowed, and that what it had bestowed it could take back again; that the House of Bourbon possessed the right divine, that France possessed nothing, and that the political right conceded in the charter of Louis XVIII. was merely a branch of the right divine, was detached by the House of Bourbon and graciously given to the people until such day as it should please the King to reassume it. Still, the House of Bourbon should have felt, from the displeasure created by the gift, that it did not come from it.

This house was churlish to the nineteenth century. It put on an ill-tempered look at every development of the nation. To

¹ In olden times, fouriers were the officials who preceded the Court and allotted the lodgings.

make use of a trivial word, that is to say, of a popular and a true word, it looked glum. The people saw this.

It thought it possessed strength because the Empire had been carried away before it like a theatrical stage-setting. It did not perceive that it had, itself, been brought in in the same fashion. It did not perceive that it also lay in that hand which had removed Napoleon.

It thought that it had roots, because it was the past. It was mistaken; it formed a part of the past, but the whole past was France. The roots of French society were not fixed in the Bourbons, but in the nations. These obscure and lively roots constituted, not the right of a family, but the history of a people. They were everywhere, except under the throne.

The House of Bourbon was to France the illustrious and bleeding knot in her history, but was no longer the principal element of her destiny, and the necessary base of her politics. She could get along without the Bourbons; she had done without them for two and twenty years; there had been a break of continuity; they did not suspect the fact. And how should they have suspected it, they who fancied that Louis XVII. reigned on the 9th of Thermidor, and that Louis XVIII. was reigning at the battle of Marengo? Never, since the origin of history, had princes been so blind in the presence of facts and the portion of divine authority which facts contain and promulgate. Never had that pretension here below which is called the right of kings denied to such a point the right from on high.

A capital error which led this family to lay its hand once more on the guarantees "granted" in 1814, on the concessions, as it termed them. Sad. A sad thing! What it termed its concessions were our conquests; what it termed our encroachments were our rights.

When the hour seemed to it to have come, the Restoration, supposing itself victorious over Bonaparte and well-rooted in the country, that is to say, believing itself to be strong and deep, abruptly decided on its plan of action, and risked its stroke. One morning it drew itself up before the face of France, and, elevating its voice, it contested the collective title and the individual right of the nation to sovereignty, of the citizen to liberty. In other words, it denied to the nation that which made it a nation, and to the citizen that which made him a citizen.

This is the foundation of those famous acts which are called the ordinances of July. The Restoration fell.

It fell justly. But, we admit, it had not been absolutely hos-

tile to all forms of progress. Great things had been accomplished, with it alongside.

Under the Restoration, the nation had grown accustomed to calm discussion, which had been lacking under the Republic, and to grandeur in peace, which had been wanting under the Empire. France free and strong had offered an encouraging spectacle to the other peoples of Europe. The Revolution had had the word under Robespierre; the cannon had had the word under Bonaparte; it was under Louis XVIII. and Charles X. that it was the turn of intelligence to have the word. The wind ceased, the torch was lighted once more. On the lofty heights, the pure light of mind could be seen flickering. A magnificent, useful, and charming spectacle. For a space of fifteen years, those great principles which are so old for the thinker, so new for the statesman, could be seen at work in perfect peace, on the public square; equality before the law, liberty of conscience, liberty of speech, liberty of the press, the accessibility of all aptitudes to all functions. Thus it proceeded until 1830. The Bourbons were an instrument of civilization which broke in the hands of Providence.

The fall of the Bourbons was full of grandeur, not on their side, but on the side of the nation. They quitted the throne with gravity, but without authority; their descent into the night was not one of those solemn disappearances which leave a sombre emotion in history; it was neither the spectral calm of Charles I., nor the eagle scream of Napoleon. They departed, that is all. They laid down the crown, and retained no aureole. They were worthy, but they were not august. They lacked, in a certain measure, the majesty of their misfortune. Charles X. during the voyage from Cherbourg, causing a round table to be cut over into a square table, appeared to be more anxious about imperilled etiquette than about the crumbling monarchy. This diminution saddened devoted men who loved their persons, and serious men who honored their race. The populace was admirable. The nation, attacked one morning with weapons, by a sort of royal insurrection, felt itself in the possession of so much force that it did not go into a rage. It defended itself, restrained itself, restored things to their places, the government to law, the Bourbons to exile, alas! and then halted! It took the old king Charles X. from beneath that dais which had sheltered Louis XIV. and set him gently on the ground. It touched the royal personages only with sadness and precaution. It was not one man, it was not a few men, it was France, France entire, France victorious and intoxicated with her victory, who

seemed to be coming to herself, and who put into practice, before the eyes of the whole world, these grave words of Guillaume du Vair after the day of the Barricades :—

“It is easy for those who are accustomed to skim the favors of the great, and to spring, like a bird from bough to bough, from an afflicted fortune to a flourishing one, to show themselves harsh towards their Prince in his adversity; but as for me, the fortune of my Kings and especially of my afflicted Kings, will always be venerable to me.”

The Bourbons carried away with them respect, but not regret. As we have just stated, their misfortune was greater than they were. They faded out in the horizon.

The Revolution of July instantly had friends and enemies throughout the entire world. The first rushed toward her with joy and enthusiasm, the others turned away, each according to his nature. At the first blush, the princes of Europe, the owls of this dawn, shut their eyes, wounded and stupefied, and only opened them to threaten. A fright which can be comprehended, a wrath which can be pardoned. This strange revolution had hardly produced a shock; it had not even paid to vanquished royalty the honor of treating it as an enemy, and of shedding its blood. In the eyes of despotic governments, who are always interested in having liberty calumniate itself, the Revolution of July committed the fault of being formidable and of remaining gentle. Nothing, however, was attempted or plotted against it. The most discontented, the most irritated, the most trembling, saluted it; whatever our egotism and our rancor may be, a mysterious respect springs from events in which we are sensible of the collaboration of some one who is working above man.

The Revolution of July is the triumph of right overthrowing the fact. A thing which is full of splendor.

Right overthrowing the fact. Hence the brilliancy of the Revolution of 1830, hence, also, its mildness. Right triumphant has no need of being violent.

Right is the just and the true.

The property of right is to remain eternally beautiful and pure. The fact, even when most necessary to all appearances, even when most thoroughly accepted by contemporaries, if it exist only as a fact, and if it contain only too little of right, or none at all, is infallibly destined to become, in the course of time, deformed, impure, perhaps, even monstrous. If one desires to learn at one blow, to what degree of hideousness the fact can attain, viewed at the distance of centuries, let him look at Machiavelli. Machiavelli is not an evil genius, nor a demon,

nor a miserable and cowardly writer; he is nothing but the fact. And he is not only the Italian fact; he is the European fact, the fact of the sixteenth century. He seems hideous, and so he is, in the presence of the moral idea of the nineteenth.

This conflict of right and fact has been going on ever since the origin of society. To terminate this duel, to amalgamate the pure idea with the human reality, to cause right to penetrate pacifically into the fact and the fact into right, that is the task of sages.

II. — BADLY SEWED.

BUT the task of sages is one thing, the task of clever men is another. The Revolution of 1830 came to a sudden halt.

As soon as a revolution has made the coast, the skilful make haste to prepare the shipwreck.

The skilful in our century have conferred on themselves the title of Statesmen; so that this word, *statesmen*, has ended by becoming somewhat of a slang word. It must be borne in mind, in fact, that wherever there is nothing but skill, there is necessarily pettiness. To say "the skilful" amounts to saying "the mediocre."

In the same way, to say "statesmen" is sometimes equivalent to saying "traitors." If, then, we are to believe the skilful, revolutions like the Revolution of July are severed arteries; a prompt ligature is indispensable. The right, too grandly proclaimed, is shaken. Also, right once firmly fixed, the state must be strengthened. Liberty once assured, attention must be directed to power.

Here the sages are not, as yet, separated from the skilful, but they begin to be distrustful. Power, very good. But, in the first place, what is power? In the second, whence comes it? The skilful do not seem to hear the murmured objection, and they continue their manoeuvres.

According to the politicians, who are ingenious in putting the mask of necessity on profitable fictions, the first requirement of a people after a revolution, when this people forms part of a monarchical continent, is to procure for itself a dynasty. In this way, say they, peace, that is to say, time to dress our wounds, and to repair the house, can be had after a revolution. The dynasty conceals the scaffolding and covers the ambulance. Now, it is not always easy to procure a dynasty.

If it is absolutely necessary, the first man of genius or even the

first man of fortune who comes to hand suffices for the manufacture of a king. You have, in the first case, Napoleon; in the second, Iturbide.

But the first family that comes to hand does not suffice to make a dynasty. There is necessarily required a certain modicum of antiquity in a race, and the wrinkle of the centuries cannot be improvised.

If we place ourselves at the point of view of the "statesmen," after making all allowances, of course, after a revolution, what are the qualities of the king which result from it? He may be and it is useful for him to be a revolutionary; that is to say, a participant in his own person in that revolution, that he should have lent a hand to it, that he should have either compromised or distinguished himself therein, that he should have touched the axe or wielded the sword in it.

What are the qualities of a dynasty? It should be national; that is to say, revolutionary at a distance, not through acts committed, but by reason of ideas accepted. It should be composed of past and be historic; be composed of future and be sympathetic.

All this explains why the early revolutions contented themselves with finding a man, Cromwell or Napoleon; and why the second absolutely insisted on finding a family, the House of Brunswick or the House of Orleans.

Royal houses resemble those Indian fig-trees, each branch of which, bending over to the earth, takes root and becomes a fig-tree itself. Each branch may become a dynasty. On the sole condition that it shall bend down to the people.

Such is the theory of the skilful.

Here, then, lies the great art: to make a little render to success the sound of a catastrophe in order that those who profit by it may tremble from it also, to season with fear every step that is taken, to augment the curve of the transition to the point of retarding progress, to dull that aurora, to denounce and retrench the harshness of enthusiasm, to cut all angles and nails, to wad triumph, to muffle up right, to envelop the giant-people in flannel, and to put it to bed very speedily, to impose a diet on that excess of health, to put Hercules on the treatment of a convalescent, to dilute the event with the expedient, to offer to spirits thirsting for the ideal that nectar thinned out with a potion, to take one's precautions against too much success, to garnish the revolution with a shade.

1830 practised this theory, already applied to England by 1688.

1830 is a revolution arrested midway. Half of progress quasi-right. Now, logic knows not the "almost," absolutely as the sun knows not the candle.

Who arrests revolutions half-way? The bourgeoisie?

Why?

Because the bourgeoisie is interest which has reached satisfaction. Yesterday it was appetite, to-day it is plenitude, to-morrow it will be satiety.

The phenomenon of 1814 after Napoleon was reproduced in 1830 after Charles X.

The attempt has been made, and wrongly, to make a class of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie is simply the contented portion of the people. The bourgeois is the man who now has time to sit down. A chair is not a caste.

But through a desire to sit down too soon, one may arrest the very march of the human race. This has often been the fault of the bourgeoisie.

One is not a class because one has committed a fault. Selfishness is not one of the divisions of the social order.

Moreover, we must be just to selfishness. The state to which that part of the nation which is called the bourgeoisie aspired after the shock of 1830 was not the inertia which is complicated with indifference and laziness, and which contains a little shame; it was not the slumber which presupposes a momentary forgetfulness accessible to dreams; it was the halt.

The halt is a word formed of a singular double and almost contradictory sense: a troop on the march, that is to say, movement; a stand, that is to say, repose.

The halt is the restoration of forces; it is repose armed and on the alert; it is the accomplished fact which posts sentinels and holds itself on its guard.

The halt presupposes the combat of yesterday and the combat of to-morrow.

It is the partition between 1830 and 1848.

What we here call combat may also be designated as progress.

The bourgeoisie then, as well as the statesmen, required a man who should express this word Halt. An Although-Because. A composite individuality, signifying revolution and signifying stability, in other terms, strengthening the present by the evident compatibility of the past with the future.

This man was "already found." His name was Louis Philippe d'Orleans.

The 221 made Louis Philippe King. Lafayette undertook the coronation.

He called it *the best of republics*. The town-hall of Paris took the place of the Cathedral of Rheims.

This substitution of a half-throne for a whole throne was "the work of 1830."

When the skilful had finished, the immense vice of their solution became apparent. All this had been accomplished outside the bounds of absolute right. Absolute right cried: "I protest!" then, terrible to say, it retired into the darkness.

III.—LOUIS PHILIPPE.

REVOLUTIONS have a terrible arm and a happy hand, they strike firmly and choose well. Even incomplete, even debased and abused and reduced to the state of a junior revolution like the Revolution of 1830, they nearly always retain sufficient providential lucidity to prevent them from falling amiss. Their eclipse is never an abdication.

Nevertheless, let us not boast too loudly; revolutions also may be deceived, and grave errors have been seen.

Let us return to 1830. 1830, in its deviation, had good luck. In the establishment which entitled itself order after the revolution had been cut short, the King amounted to more than royalty. Louis Philippe was a rare man.

The son of a father to whom history will accord certain 'attenuating circumstances, but also as worthy of esteem as that father had been of blame; possessing all private virtues and many public virtues; careful of his health, of his fortune, of his person, of his affairs, knowing the value of a minute and not always the value of a year; sober, serene, peaceable, patient; a good man and a good prince; sleeping with his wife, and having in his palace lackeys charged with the duty of showing the conjugal bed to the bourgeois, an ostentation of the regular sleeping-apartment which had become useful after the former illegitimate displays of the elder branch; knowing all the languages of Europe, and, what is more rare, all the languages of all interests, and speaking them; an admirable representative of the "middle class," but outstripping it, and in every way greater than it; possessing excellent sense, while appreciating the blood from which he had sprung, counting most of all on his intrinsic worth, and, on the question of his race, very particular, declaring himself Orleans and not Bourbon; thoroughly the first Prince of the Blood Royal while he was still only a Serene Highness, but a frank bourgeois from the day he became king; diffuse in public, concise in

private ; reputed, but not proved to be a miser ; at bottom, one of those economists who are readily prodigal at their own fancy or duty ; lettered, but not very sensitive to letters ; a gentleman, but not a chevalier ; simple, calm, and strong ; adored by his family and his household ; a fascinating talker, an undeceived statesman, inwardly cold, dominated by immediate interest, always governing at the shortest range, incapable of rancor and of gratitude, making use without mercy of superiority on mediocrity, clever in getting parliamentary majorities to put in the wrong those mysterious unanimities which mutter dully under thrones ; unreserved, sometimes imprudent in his lack of reserve, but with marvellous address in that imprudence ; fertile in expedients, in countenances, in masks ; making France fear Europe and Europe France ! Incontestably fond of his country, but preferring his family ; assuming more domination than authority and more authority than dignity, a disposition which has this unfortunate property, that as it turns everything to success, it admits of ruse and does not absolutely repudiate baseness, but which has this valuable side, that it preserves politics from violent shocks, the state from fractures, and society from catastrophes ; minute, correct, vigilant, attentive, sagacious, indefatigable ; contradicting himself at times and giving himself the lie ; bold against Austria at Ancona, obstinate against England in Spain, bombarding Antwerp, and paying off Pritchard ; singing the Marseillaise with conviction, inaccessible to despondency, to lassitude, to the taste for the beautiful and the ideal, to daring generosity, to Utopia, to chimeras, to wrath, to vanity, to fear ; possessing all the forms of personal intrepidity ; a general at Valmy ; a soldier at Jemappes ; attacked eight times by regicides and always smiling ; brave as a grenadier, courageous as a thinker ; uneasy only in the face of the chances of a European shaking up, and unfitted for great political adventures ; always ready to risk his life, never his work ; disguising his will in influence, in order that he might be obeyed as an intelligence rather than as a king ; endowed with observation and not with divination ; not very attentive to minds, but knowing men, that is to say, requiring to see in order to judge ; prompt and penetrating good sense, practical wisdom, easy speech, prodigious memory ; drawing incessantly on this memory, his only point of resemblance with Cæsar, Alexander, and Napoleon ; knowing deeds, facts, details, dates, proper names, ignorant of tendencies, passions, the diverse geniuses of the crowd, the interior aspirations, the hidden and obscure uprisings of souls, in a word, all that can be

designated as the invisible currents of consciences; accepted by the surface, but little in accord with France lower down; extricating himself by dint of tact; governing too much and not enough; his own first minister; excellent at creating out of the pettiness of realities, an obstacle to the immensity of ideas; mingling a genuine creative faculty of civilization, of order and organization, an indescribable spirit of proceedings and chicanery, the founder and lawyer of a dynasty; having something of Charlemagne and something of an attorney; in short, a lofty and original figure, a prince who understood how to create authority in spite of the uneasiness of France, and power in spite of the jealousy of Europe. Louis Philippe will be classed among the eminent men of his century, and would be ranked among the most illustrious governors of history had he loved glory but a little, and if he had had the sentiment of what is great to the same degree as the feeling for what is useful.

Louis Philippe had been handsome, and in his old age he remained graceful; not always approved by the nation, he always was so by the masses; he pleased. He had that gift of charming. He lacked majesty; he wore no crown, although a king, and no white hair, although an old man; his manners belonged to the old regime and his habits to the new; a mixture of the noble and the bourgeois which suited 1830; Louis Philippe was transition reigning; he had preserved the ancient pronounciation and the ancient orthography which he placed at the service of opinions modern; he loved Poland and Hungary, but he wrote *les Polonois*, and he pronounced *les Hongrais*. He wore the uniform of the national guard, like Charles X., and the ribbon of the Legion of Honor, like Napoleon.

He went a little to chapel, not at all to the chase, never to the opera. Incorruptible by sacristans, by whippers-in, by ballet-dancers; this made a part of his bourgeois popularity. He had no heart. He went out with his umbrella under his arm, and this umbrella long formed a part of his aureole. He was a bit of a mason, a bit of a gardener, something of a doctor; he bled a postilion who had tumbled from his horse; Louis Philippe no more went about without his lancet, than did Henri IV. without his poniard. The Royalists jeered at this ridiculous king, the first who had ever shed blood with the object of healing.

For the grievances against Louis Philippe, there is one deduction to be made; there is that which accuses royalty, that which accuses the reign, that which accuses the King; three columns which all give different totals. Democratic right con-

fiscated, progress becomes a matter of secondary interest, the protests of the street violently repressed, military execution of insurrections, the rising passed over by arms, the Rue Transnonain, the counsels of war, the absorption of the real country by the legal country, on half shares with three hundred thousand privileged persons, — these are the deeds of royalty; Belgium refused, Algeria too harshly conquered, and, as in the case of India by the English, with more barbarism than civilization, the breach of faith, to Abd-el-Kader, Blaye, Deutz bought, Pritchard paid, — these are the doings of the reign; the policy which was more domestic than national was the doing of the King.

As will be seen, the proper deduction having been made, the King's charge is decreased.

This is his great fault; he was modest in the name of France.

Whence arises this fault?

We will state it.

Louis Philippe was rather too much of a paternal king; that incubation of a family with the object of founding a dynasty is afraid of everything and does not like to be disturbed; hence excessive timidity, which is displeasing to the people, who have the 14th of July in their civil and Austerlitz in their military tradition.

Moreover, if we deduct the public duties which require to be fulfilled first of all, that deep tenderness of Louis Philippe towards his family was deserved by the family. That domestic group was worthy of admiration. Virtues there dwelt side by side with talents. One of Louis Philippe's daughters, Marie d'Orléans, placed the name of her race among artists, as Charles d'Orléans had placed it among poets. She made of her soul a marble which she named Jeanne d'Arc. Two of Louis Philippe's daughters elicited from Metternich this eulogium: "They are young people such as are rarely seen, and princes such as are never seen."

This, without any dissimulation, and also without any exaggeration, is the truth about Louis Philippe.

To be Prince Equality, to bear in his own person the contradiction of the Restoration and the Revolution, to have that quieting side of the revolutionary which becomes reassuring in governing power, therein lay the fortune of Louis Philippe in 1830; never was there a more complete adaptation of a man to an event; the one entered into the other, and the incarnation took place. Louis Philippe is 1830 made man. Moreover, he had in his favor that great recommendation to the throne, exile. He had been proscribed, a wanderer, poor. He had lived by

his own labor. In Switzerland, this heir to the richest princely domains in France had sold an old horse in order to obtain bread. At Reichenau, he gave lessons in mathematics, while his sister Adelaide did wool work and sewed. These souvenirs connected with a king rendered the bourgeoisie enthusiastic. He had, with his own hands, demolished the iron cage of Mont-Saint-Michel, built by Louis XI. and used by Louis XV. He was the companion of Dumouriez, he was the friend of Lafayette; he had belonged to the Jacobins' club; Mirabeau had slapped him on the shoulder; Danton had said to him: "Young man!" At the age of four and twenty, in '93, being then M. de Chartres, he had witnessed, from the depth of a box, the trial of Louis XVI., so well named *that poor tyrant*. The blind clairvoyance of the Revolution, breaking royalty in the King and the King with royalty, did so almost without noticing the man in the fierce crushing of the idea, the vast storm of the Assembly-Tribunal, the public wrath interrogating, Capet not knowing what to reply, the alarming, stupefied vacillation by that royal head beneath that sombre breath, the relative innocence of all in that catastrophe, of those who condemned as well as of the man condemned, — he had looked on those things, he had contemplated that giddiness; he had seen the centuries appear before the bar of the Assembly-Convention; he had beheld, behind Louis XVI., that unfortunate passer-by who was made responsible, the terrible culprit, the monarchy, rise through the shadows; and there had lingered in his soul the respectful fear of these immense justices of the populace, which are almost as impersonal as the justice of God.

The trace left in him by the Revolution was prodigious. Its memory was like a living imprint of those great years, minute by minute. One day, in the presence of a witness whom we are not permitted to doubt, he rectified from memory the whole of the letter A in the alphabetical list of the Constituent Assembly.

Louis Philippe was a king of the broad daylight. While he reigned the press was free, the tribune was free, conscience and speech were free. The laws of September are open to sight. Although fully aware of the gnawing power of light on privileges, he left his throne exposed to the light. History will do justice to him for this loyalty.

Louis Philippe, like all historical men who have passed from the scene, is to-day put on his trial by the human conscience. His case is, as yet, only in the lower court.

The hour when history speaks with its free and venerable accent, has not yet sounded for him; the moment has not come

to pronounce a definite judgment on this king; the austere and illustrious historian Louis Blanc has himself recently softened his first verdict; Louis Philippe was elected by those two *almos* which are called the 221 and 1830; that is to say, by a half-Parliament, and a half-revolution; and in any case, from the superior point of view where philosophy must place itself, we cannot judge him here, as the reader has seen above, except with certain reservations in the name of the absolute democratic principle; in the eyes of the absolute, outside these two rights, the right of man in the first place, the right of the people in the second, all is usurpation; but what we can say, even at the present day, that after making these reserves is, that to sum up the whole, and in whatever manner he is considered, Louis Philippe, taken in himself, and from the point of view of human goodness, will remain, to use the antique language of ancient history, one of the best princes who ever sat on a throne.

What is there against him? That throne. Take away Louis Philippe the king, there remains the man. And the man is good. He is good at times even to the point of being admirable. Often, in the midst of his gravest souvenirs, after a day of conflict with the whole diplomacy of the continent, he returned at night to his apartments, and there, exhausted with fatigue, overwhelmed with sleep, what did he do? He took a death sentence and passed the night in revising a criminal suit, considering it something to hold his own against Europe, but that it was a still greater matter to rescue a man from the executioner. He obstinately maintained his opinion against his keeper of the seals; he disputed the ground with the guillotine foot by foot against the crown attorneys, those *chatterers of the law*, as he called them. Sometimes the pile of sentences covered his table; he examined them all; it was anguish to him to abandon these miserable, condemned heads. One day, he said to the same witness to whom we have recently referred: "I won seven last night." During the early years of his reign, the death penalty was as good as abolished, and the erection of a scaffold was a violence committed against the King. The Grève having disappeared with the elder branch, a bourgeois place of execution was instituted under the name of the Barrière-Saint-Jacques; "practical men" felt the necessity of a quasi-legitimate guillotine; and this was one of the victories of Casimir Périer, who represented the narrow sides of the bourgeoisie, over Louis Philippe, who represented its liberal sides. Louis Philippe annotated Beccaria with his own hand. After

the Fieschi machine, he exclaimed : " What a pity that I was not wounded ! Then I might have pardoned ! " On another occasion, alluding to the resistance offered by his ministry, he wrote in connection with a political criminal, who is one of the most generous figures of our day : " His pardon is granted ; it only remains for me to obtain it. " Louis Philippe was as gentle as Louis IX. and as kindly as Henri IV.

Now, to our mind, in history, where kindness is the rarest of pearls, the man who is kindly almost takes precedence of the man who is great.

Louis Philippe having been severely judged by some, harshly, perhaps, by others, it is quite natural that a man, himself a phantom at the present day, who knew that king, should come and testify in his favor before history ; this deposition, whatever else it may be, is evidently and above all things, entirely disinterested ; an epitaph penned by a dead man is sincere ; one shade may console another shade ; the sharing of the same shadows confers the right to praise it ; it is not greatly to be feared that it will ever be said of two tombs in exile : " This one flattered the other. "

IV.—CRACKS BENEATH THE FOUNDATION.

At the moment when the drama which we are narrating is on the point of penetrating into the depths of one of the tragic clouds which envelop the beginning of Louis Philippe's reign, it was necessary that there should be no equivoue, and it became requisite that this book should offer some explanation with regard to this king.

Louis Philippe had entered into possession of his royal authority without violence, without any direct action on his part, by virtue of a revolutionary change, evidently quite distinct from the real aim of the Revolution, but in which he, the Duc d'Orléans, exercised no personal initiative. He had been born a Prince, and he believed himself to have been elected King. He had not served this mandate on himself ; he had not taken it ; it had been offered to him, and he had accepted it ; convinced, wrongly, to be sure, but convinced nevertheless, that the offer was in accordance with right and that the acceptance of it was in accordance with duty. Hence his possession was in good faith. Now, we say it in good conscience, Louis Philippe being in possession in perfect good faith, and the democracy being in good faith in its attack, the amount of terror discharged by the social conflicts weighs neither on the King nor

on the democracy. A clash of principles resembles a clash of elements. The ocean defends the water, the hurricane defends the air, the King defends Royalty, the democracy defends the people; the relative, which is the monarchy, resists the absolute, which is the republic; society bleeds in this conflict, but that which constitutes its suffering to-day will constitute its safety later on; and, in any case, those who combat are not to be blamed; one of the two parties is evidently mistaken; the right is not, like the Colossus of Rhodes, on two shores at once, with one foot on the republic, and one in Royalty; it is indivisible, and all on one side; but those who are in error are so sincerely; a blind man is no more a criminal than a Vendean is a ruffian. Let us, then, impute to the fatality of things alone these formidable collisions. Whatever the nature of these tempests may be, human irresponsibility is mingled with them.

Let us complete this exposition.

The government of 1840 led a hard life immediately. Born yesterday, it was obliged to fight to-day.

Hardly installed, it was already everywhere conscious of vague movements of traction on the apparatus of July so recently laid, and so lacking in solidity.

Resistance was born on the morrow; perhaps even, it was born on the preceding evening. From month to month the hostility increased, and from being concealed it became patent.

The Revolution of July, which gained but little acceptance outside of France by kings, had been diversely interpreted in France, as we have said.

God delivers over to men his visible will in events, an obscure text written in a mysterious tongue. Men immediately make translations of it; translations hasty, incorrect, full of errors, of gaps, and of nonsense. Very few minds comprehend the divine language. The most sagacious, the calmest, the most profound, decipher slowly, and when they arrive with their text, the task has long been completed; there are already twenty translations on the public place. From each remaining springs a party, and from each misinterpretation a faction; and each party thinks that it alone has the true text, and each faction thinks that it possesses the light.

Power itself is often a faction.

There are, in revolutions, swimmers who go against the current; they are the old parties.

For the old parties who cling to heredity by the grace of God, think that revolutions, having sprung from the right to revolt, one has the right to revolt against them. Error. For in these

revolutions, the one who revolts is not the people; it is the king. Revolution is precisely the contrary of revolt. Every revolution, being a normal outcome, contains within itself its legitimacy, which false revolutionists sometimes dishonor, but which remains even when soiled, which survives even when stained with blood.

Revolutions spring not from an accident, but from necessity. A revolution is a return from the fictitious to the real. It is because it must be that it is.

None the less did the old legitimist parties assail the Revolution of 1830 with all the vehemence which arises from false reasoning. Errors make excellent projectiles. They strike it cleverly in its vulnerable spot, in default of a cuirass, in its lack of logic; they attacked this revolution in its royalty. They shouted to it: "Revolution, why this king?" Factions are blind men who aim correctly.

This cry was uttered equally by the republicans. But coming from them, this cry was logical. What was blindness in the legitimists was clearness of vision in the democrats. 1830 had bankrupted the people. The enraged democracy reproached it with this.

Between the attack of the past and the attack of the future, the establishment of July struggled. It represented the minute at loggerheads on the one hand with the monarchical centuries, on the other hand with eternal right.

In addition, and beside all this, as it was no longer revolution and had become a monarchy, 1830 was obliged to take precedence of all Europe. To keep the peace, was an increase of complication. A harmony established contrary to sense is often more onerous than a war. From this secret conflict, always muzzled, but always growling, was born armed peace, that ruinous expedient of civilization which in the harness of the European cabinets is suspicious in itself. The Royalty of July reared up, in spite of the fact that it caught it in the harness of European cabinets. Metternich would gladly have put it in kicking-straps. Pushed on in France by progress, it pushed on the monarchies, those loiterers in Europe. After having been towed, it undertook to tow.

Meanwhile, within her, pauperism, the proletariat, salary, education, penal servitude, prostitution, the fate of the woman, wealth, misery, production, consumption, division, exchange, coin, credit, the rights of capital, the rights of labor,—all these questions were multiplied above society, a terrible slope.

Outside of political parties properly so called, another move-

ment became manifest. Philosophical fermentation replied to democratic fermentation. The elect felt troubled as well as the masses ; in another manner, but quite as much.

Thinkers meditated, while the soil, that is to say, the people, traversed by revolutionary currents, trembled under them with indescribably vague epileptic shocks. These dreamers, some isolated, others united in families and almost in communion, turned over social questions in a pacific but profound manner ; impassive miners, who tranquilly pushed their galleries into the depths of a volcano, hardly disturbed by the dull commotion and the furnaces of which they caught glimpses.

This tranquillity was not the least beautiful spectacle of this agitated epoch.

These men left to political parties the question of rights, they occupied themselves with the question of happiness.

The well-being of man, that was what they wanted to extract from society.

They raised material questions, questions of agriculture, of industry, of commerce, almost to the dignity of a religion. In civilization, such as it has formed itself, a little by the command of God, a great deal by the agency of man, interests combine, unite, and amalgamate in a manner to form a veritable hard rock, in accordance with a dynamic law, patiently studied by economists, those geologists of politics. These men who grouped themselves under different appellations, but who may all be designated by the generic title of socialists, endeavored to pierce that rock and to cause it to spout forth the living waters of human felicity.

From the question of the scaffold to the question of war, their works embraced everything. To the rights of man, as proclaimed by the French Revolution, they added the rights of woman and the rights of the child.

The reader will not be surprised if, for various reasons, we do not here treat in a thorough manner, from the theoretical point of view, the questions raised by socialism. We confine ourselves to indicating them.

All the problems that the socialists proposed to themselves, cosmogonic visions, revery and mysticism being cast aside, can be reduced to two principal problems.

First problem : To produce wealth.

Second problem : To share it.

The first problem contains the question of work.

The second contains the question of salary.

In the first problem the employment of forces is in question.

In the second, the distribution of enjoyment.

From the proper employment of forces results public power.

From a good distribution of enjoyments results individual happiness.

By a good distribution, not an equal but an equitable distribution must be understood.

From these two things combined, the public power without, individual happiness within, results social prosperity.

Social prosperity means the man happy, the citizen free, the nation great.

England solves the first of these two problems. She creates wealth admirably, she divides it badly. This solution which is complete on one side only leads her fatally to two extremes: monstrous opulence, monstrous wretchedness. All enjoyments for some, all privations for the rest, that is to say, for the people; privilege, exception, monopoly, feudalism, born from toil itself. A false and dangerous situation, which sates public power or private misery, which sets the roots of the State in the sufferings of the individual. A badly constituted grandeur in which are combined all the material elements and into which no moral element enters.

Communism and agrarian law think that they solve the second problem. They are mistaken. Their division kills production. Equal partition abolishes emulation; and consequently labor. It is a partition made by the butcher, which kills that which it divides. It is therefore impossible to pause over these pretended solutions. Slaying wealth is not the same thing as dividing it.

The two problems require to be solved together, to be well solved. The two problems must be combined and made but one.

Solve only the first of the two problems; you will be Venice, you will be England. You will have, like Venice, an artificial power, or, like England, a material power; you will be the wicked rich man. You will die by an act of violence, as Venice died, or by bankruptcy, as England will fall. And the world will allow to die and fall all that is merely selfishness, all that does not represent for the human race either a virtue or an idea.

It is well understood here, that by the words Venice, England, we designate not the peoples, but social structures; the oligarchies superposed on nations, and not the nations themselves. The nations always have our respect and our sympathy. Venice, as a people, will live again; England, the aristocracy, will fall, but England, the nation, is immortal. That said, we continue.

Solve the two problems, encourage the wealthy, and protect the poor, suppress misery, put an end to the unjust farming out of the feeble by the strong, put a bridle on the iniquitous jealousy of the man who is making his way against the man who has reached the goal, adjust, mathematically and fraternally, salary to labor, mingle gratuitous and compulsory education with the growth of childhood, and make of science the base of manliness, develop minds while keeping arms busy, be at one and the same time a powerful people and a family of happy men, render property democratic, not by abolishing it, but by making it universal, so that every citizen, without exception, may be a proprietor, an easier matter than is generally supposed; in two words, learn how to produce wealth and how to distribute it, and you will have at once moral and material greatness; and you will be worthy to call yourself France.

This is what socialism said outside and above a few sects which have gone astray; that is what it sought in facts, that is what it sketched out in minds.

Efforts worthy of admiration! Sacred attempts!

These doctrines, these theories, these resistances, the unforeseen necessity for the statesman to take philosophers into account, confused evidences of which we catch a glimpse, a new system of politics to be created, which shall be in accord with the old world without too much disaccord with the new revolutionary ideal, a situation in which it became necessary to use Lafayette to defend Polignac, the intuition of progress transparent beneath the revolt, the chambers and streets, the competitions to be brought into equilibrium around him, his faith in the Revolution, perhaps an eventual indefinable resignation born of the vague acceptance of a superior definitive right, his desire to remain of his race, his domestic spirit, his sincere respect for the people, his own honesty, preoccupied Louis Philippe almost painfully, and there were moments when, strong and courageous as he was, he was overwhelmed by the difficulties of being a king.

He felt under his feet a formidable disaggregation, which was not, nevertheless, a reduction to dust, France being more France than ever.

Piles of shadows covered the horizon. A strange shade, gradually drawing nearer, extended little by little over men, over things, over ideas; a shade which came from wraths and systems. Everything which had been hastily stifled was moving and fermenting. At times the conscience of the honest man resumed its breathing, so great was the discomfort of

that air in which sophisms were intermingled with truths. Spirits trembled in the social anxiety like leaves at the approach of a storm. The electric tension was such that at certain instants, the first comer, a stranger, brought light. Then the twilight obscurity closed in again. At intervals, deep and dull mutterings allowed a judgment to be formed as to the quantity of thunder contained by the cloud.

Twenty months had barely elapsed since the Revolution of July, the year 1832 had opened with an aspect of something impending and threatening.

The distress of the people, the laborers without bread, the last Prince de Condé engulfed in the shadows, Brussels expelling the Nassaus as Paris did the Bourbons, Belgium offering herself to a French Prince and giving herself to an English Prince, the Russian hatred of Nicolas, behind us the demons of the South, Ferdinand in Spain, Miguel in Portugal, the earth quaking in Italy, Metternich extending his hand over Bologna, France treating Austria sharply at Ancona, at the North no one knew what sinister sound of the hammer nailing up Poland in her coffin, irritated glances watching France narrowly all over Europe, England, a suspected ally, ready to give a push to that which was tottering and to hurl herself on that which should fall, the peerage sheltering itself behind Beccaria to refuse four heads to the law, the fleurs-de-lys erased from the King's carriage, the cross torn from Notre Dame, Lafayette lessened, Laffitte ruined, Benjamin Constant dead in indigence, Casimir Périer dead in the exhaustion of his power; political and social malady breaking out simultaneously in the two capitals of the kingdom, the one in the city of thought, the other in the city of toil; at Paris civil war, at Lyons servile war; in the two cities, the same glare of the furnace; a crater-like crimson on the brow of the people; the South rendered fanatic, the West troubled, the Duchesse de Berry in la Vendée, plots, conspiracies, risings, cholera, added the sombre roar of tumult of events to the sombre roar of ideas.

V. — FACTS WHENCE HISTORY SPRINGS AND WHICH HISTORY IGNORES.

TOWARDS the end of April, everything had become aggravated. The fermentation entered the boiling state. Ever since 1830, petty partial revolts had been going on here and there, which were quickly suppressed, but ever bursting forth afresh, the sign of a vast underlying conflagration. Something

terrible was in preparation. Glimpses could be caught of the features still indistinct and imperfectly lighted, of a possible revolution. France kept an eye on Paris; Paris kept an eye on the Fauburg Saint-Antoine.

The Faubourg Saint-Antoine, which was in a dull glow, was beginning its ebullition.

The wine-shops of the Rue de Charonne were, although the union of the two epithets seems singular when applied to wine-shops, grave and stormy.

The government was there purely and simply called in question. There people publicly discussed the *question of fighting or of keeping quiet*. There were back shops where workingmen were made to swear that they would hasten into the street at the first cry of alarm, and "that they would fight without counting the number of the enemy." This engagement once entered into, a man seated in the corner of the wine-shop "assumed a sonorous tone," and said: "You understand! You have sworn!"

Sometimes they went up stairs, to a private room on the first floor, and there scenes that were almost masonic were enacted. They made the initiated take oaths *to render service to himself as well as to the fathers of families*. That was the formula.

In the tap-rooms, "subversive" pamphlets were read. *They treated the government with contempt*, says a secret report of that time.

Words like the following could be heard there:—

"I don't know the names of the leaders. We folks shall not know the day until two hours beforehand." One workman said: "There are three hundred of us, let each contribute ten sous, that will make one hundred and fifty francs with which to procure powder and shot."

Another said: "I don't ask for six months, I don't ask for even two. In less than a fortnight we shall be parallel with the government. With twenty five thousand men we can face them." Another said: "I don't sleep at night, because I make cartridges all night." From time to time, men "of bourgeois appearance, and in good coats" came and "caused embarrassment," and with the air of "command," shook hands with *the most important*, and then went away. They never stayed more than ten minutes. Significant remarks were exchanged in a low tone: "The plot is ripe, the matter is arranged." "It was murmured by all who were there," to borrow the very expression of one of those who were present. The exaltation was such that one day, a workingman exclaimed, before the whole wine-shop: "We have no arms!" One of his comrades replied:

“The soldiers have!” thus parodying without being aware of the fact, Bonaparte’s proclamation to the army in Italy: “When they had anything of a more secret nature on hand,” adds one report, “they did not communicate it to each other.” It is not easy to understand what they could conceal after what they said.

These reunions were sometimes periodical. At certain ones of them, there were never more than eight or ten persons present, and they were always the same. In others, any one entered who wished, and the room was so full that they were forced to stand. Some went thither through enthusiasm and passion; others because it *was on their way to their work*. As during the Revolution, there were patriotic women in some of these wine-shops who embraced new-comers.

Other expressive facts came to light.

A man would enter a shop, drink, and go his way with the remark: “Wine-merchant, the revolution will pay what is due to you.”

Revolutionary agents were appointed in a wine-shop facing the Rue de Charonne. The balloting was carried on in their caps.

Workingmen met at the house of a fencing-master who gave lessons in the Rue de Cotte. There there was a trophy of arms formed of wooden broadswords, canes, clubs, and foils. One day, the buttons were removed from the foils.

A workman said: “There are twenty-five of us, but they don’t count on me, because I am looked upon as a machine.” Later on, that machine became Quenisset.

The indefinite things which were brewing gradually acquired a strange and indescribable notoriety. A woman sweeping off her doorsteps said to another woman: “For a long time, there has been a strong force busy making cartridges.” In the open street, proclamation could be seen addressed to the National Guard in the departments. One of these proclamations was signed: *Burtot, wine-merchant*.

One day a man with his beard worn like a collar and with an Italian accent mounted a stone post at the door of a liquor-seller in the Marché Lenoir, and read aloud a singular document, which seemed to emanate from an occult power. Groups formed around him, and applauded.

The passages which touched the crowd most deeply were collected and noted down. “—Our doctrines are trammelled, our proclamations torn, our bill-stickers are spied upon and thrown into prison.”—“The breakdown which has recently taken place in cottons has converted to us many mediums.”—

"The future of nations is being worked out in our obscure ranks."—"Here are the fixed terms: action or reaction, revolution or counter-revolution. For, at our epoch, we no longer believe either in inertia or in immobility. For the people against the people, that is the question. There is no other."—"On the day when we cease to suit you, break us, but up to that day, help us to march on." All this in broad daylight.

Other deeds, more audacious still, were suspicious in the eyes of the people by reason of their very audacity. On the 4th of April, 1832, a passer-by mounted the post on the corner which forms the angle of the Rue Sainte-Marguerite and shouted: "I am a Babouvist!" But beneath Babeuf, the people scented Gisquet.

Among other things, this man said:—

"Down with property! The opposition of the left is cowardly and treacherous. When it wants to be on the right side, it preaches revolution, it is democratic in order to escape being beaten, and royalist so that it may not have to fight. The republicans are beasts with feathers. Distrust the republicans, citizens of the laboring classes."

"Silence, citizen spy!" cried an artisan.

This shout put an end to the discourse.

Mysterious incidents occurred.

At nightfall, a workingman encountered near the canal a "very well dressed man," who said to him: "Whither are you bound, citizen?" "Sir," replied the workingman, "I have not the the honor of your acquaintance." "I know you very well, however." And the man added: "Don't be alarmed, I am an agent of the committee. You are suspected of not being quite faithful. You know that if you reveal anything, there is an eye fixed on you." Then he shook hands with the workingman and went away, saying: "We shall meet again soon."

The police, who were on the alert, collected singular dialogues, not only in the wine-shops, but in the street.

"Get yourself received very soon," said a weaver to a cabinet-maker.

"Why?"

"There is going to be a shot to fire."

Two ragged pedestrians exchanged these remarkable replies, fraught with evident Jacquerie:—

"Who governs us?"

"M. Philippe."

"No, it is the bourgeoisie."

The reader is mistaken if he thinks that we take the word *Jacquerie* in a bad sense. The Jacques were the poor.

On another occasion two men were heard to say to each other as they passed by: "We have a good plan of attack."

Only the following was caught of a private conversation between four men who were crouching in a ditch of the circle of the *Barrière du Trône*:—

"Everything possible will be done to prevent his walking about Paris any more."

Who was the *he*? Menacing obscurity.

"The principal leaders," as they said in the faubourg, held themselves apart. It was supposed that they met for consultation in a wine-shop near the point Saint-Eustache. A certain Aug—, chief of the Society aid for tailors, Rue Mondétour, had the reputation of serving as intermediary central between the leaders and the Faubourg Saint-Antoine.

Nevertheless, there was always a great deal of mystery about these leaders, and no certain fact can invalidate the singular arrogance of this reply made later on by a man accused before the Court of Peers:—

"Who was your leader?"

"*I knew of none and I recognized none.*"

There was nothing but words, transparent but vague; sometimes idle reports, rumors, hearsay. Other indications cropped up.

A carpenter, occupied in nailing boards to a fence around the ground on which a house was in process of construction, in the Rue de Reuilly, found on that plot the torn fragment of a letter on which were still legible the following lines:—

The committee must take measures to prevent recruiting in the sections for the different societies.

And, as a postscript:—

We have learned that there are guns in the Rue du Faubourg-Poissonnière, No. 5 [bis], to the number of five or six thousand, in the house of a gunsmith in that court. The section owns no arms.

What excited the carpenter and caused him to show this thing to his neighbors was the fact, that a few paces further on he picked up another paper, torn like the first, and still more significant, of which we reproduce a facsimile, because of the historical interest attaching to these strange documents:—

Q	C	D	E	Learn this list by heart. After so doing you will tear it up. The men admitted will do the same when you have transmitted their orders to them. Health and Fraternity, <i>u og a' fe</i> L.
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It was only later on that the persons who were in the secret of this find at the time, learned the significance of those four capital letters: *quinturions*, *centurions*, *decurions*, *éclaireurs* [scouts], and the sense of the letters: *u og a' fe*, which was a date, and meant April 15th, 1832. Under each capital letter were inscribed names followed by very characteristic notes. Thus: Q. *Bannerel*. 8 guns, 83 cartridges. A safe man. — C. *Boubière*. 1 pistol, 40 cartridges. — D. *Rollet*. 1 foil, 1 pistol, 1 pound of powder. — E. *Tessier*. 1 sword, 1 cartridge-box. Exact. — *Terreur*. 8 guns. Brave, etc.

Finally, this carpenter found, still in the same enclosure, a third paper on which was written in pencil, but very legibly, this sort of enigmatical list: —

Unité: Blanchard: Arbre-Sec. 6.
Barra. Soize. Salle-au-Comte.
Kosciusko. Aubry the Butcher?
J. J. R.
Caius Gracchus.
Right of revision. Dufond. Four.
Fall of the Girondists. Derbac. Maubuée.
Washington. Pinson. 1 pistol, 86 cartridges.
Marseillaise.
Sovereignty of the people. Michel. Quincampoix. Sword.
Hoche.
Marceau. Plato. Arbre-Sec.
Warsaw. Tilly, crier of the *Populaire*.

The honest bourgeois into whose hands this list fell knew its significance. It appears that this list was the complete nomenclature of the sections of the fourth arrondissement of the Society of the Rights of Man, with the names and dwellings of the chiefs of sections. To-day, when all these facts which were obscure are nothing more than history, we may publish them. It should be added, that the foundation of the Society of the Rights of Man seems to have been posterior to the date when this paper was found. Perhaps this was only a rough draft.

Still, according to all the remarks and the words, according to written notes, material facts begin to make their appearance.

In the Rue Popincourt, in the house of a dealer in bric-à-brac, there were seized seven sheets of gray paper, all folded alike lengthwise and in four; these sheets enclosed twenty-six squares of this same gray paper folded in the form of a cartridge, and a card, on which was written the following:—

Saltpetre	12 ounces.
Sulphur	2 ounces.
Charcoal	2 ounces and a half.
Water	2 ounces.

The report of the seizure stated that the drawer exhaled a strong smell of powder.

A mason returning from his day's work, left behind him a little package on a bench near the bridge of Austerlitz. This package was taken to the police station. It was opened, and in it were found two printed dialogues, signed *Lahautière*, a song entitled: "Workmen, band together," and a tin box full of cartridges.

One artisan drinking with a comrade made the latter feel him to see how warm he was; the other man felt a pistol under his waistcoat.

In a ditch on the boulevard, between Père-Lachaise and the Barrière du Trône, at the most deserted spot, some children, while playing, discovered beneath a mass of shavings and refuse bits of wood, a bag containing a bullet-mould, a wooden punch for the preparation of cartridges, a wooden bowl, in which there were grains of hunting-powder, and a little cast-iron pot whose interior presented evident traces of melted lead.

Police agents, making their way suddenly and unexpectedly at five o'clock in the morning, into the dwelling of a certain Pardon, who was afterwards a member of the Barricade-Merry section and got himself killed in the insurrection of April, 1834, found him standing near his bed, and holding in his hand some cartridges which he was in the act of preparing.

Towards the hour when workingmen repose, two men were seen to meet between the Barrière Picpus and the Barrière Charenton in a little lane between two walls, near a wine-shop, in front of which there was a "Jeu de Siam."¹ One drew a pistol from beneath his blouse and handed it to the other. As he was handing it to him, he noticed that the perspiration of his chest had made the powder damp. He primed the pistol and added more powder to what was already in the pan. Then the two men parted.

¹ A game of ninepins, in which the ball is smaller than the other, so that it does not roll straight, but describes a curve on the ground.

A certain Gallais, afterwards killed in the Rue Beaubourg in the affair of April, boasted of having in his house seven hundred cartridges and twenty-four flints.

The government one day received a warning that arms and two hundred thousand cartridges had just been distributed in the faubourg. On the following week thirty thousand cartridges were distributed. The remarkable point about it was, that the police were not able to seize a single one.

An intercepted letter read: "The day is not far distant when, within four hours by the clock, eighty thousand patriots will be under arms."

All this fermentation was public, one might almost say tranquil. The approaching insurrection was preparing its storm calmly in the face of the government. No singularity was lacking to this still subterranean crisis, which was already perceptible. The bourgeois talked peaceably to the working-classes of what was in preparation. They said: "How is the rising coming along?" in the same tone in which they would have said: "How is your wife?"

A furniture-dealer, of the Rue Moreau, inquired: "Well, when are you going to make the attack?"

Another shop-keeper said:—

"The attack will be made soon."

"I know it. A month ago, there were fifteen thousand of you, now there are twenty-five thousand." He offered his gun, and a neighbor offered a small pistol which he was willing to sell for seven francs.

Moreover, the revolutionary fever was growing. Not a point in Paris nor in France was exempt from it. The artery was beating everywhere. Like those membranes which arise from certain inflammations and form in the human body, the network of secret societies began to spread all over the country. From the associations of the Friends of the People, which was at the same time public and secret, sprang the Society of the Rights of Man, which also dated from one of the orders of the day: *Pluviôse, Year 40 of the republican era*, which was destined to survive even the mandate of the Court of Assizes which pronounced its dissolution, and which did not hesitate to bestow on its sections significant names like the following:—

Pikes.

Tocsin.

Signal cannon.

Phrygian cap.

January 21.

The beggars.
 The vagabonds.
 Forward march.
 Robespierre.
 Level.
 Ça Ira.

The Society of the Rights of Man engendered the Society of Action. These were impatient individuals who broke away and hastened ahead. Other associations sought to recruit themselves from the great mother societies. The members of sections complained that they were torn asunder. Thus, the Gallic Society, and the committee of organization of the Municipalities. Thus the associations for the liberty of the press, for individual liberty, for the instruction of the people against indirect taxes. Then the Society of Equal Workingmen which was divided into three fractions, the levellers, the communists, the reformers. Then the Army of the Bastilles, a sort of cohort organized on a military footing, four men commanded by a corporal, ten by a sergeant, twenty by a sub-lieutenant, forty by a lieutenant; there were never more than five men who knew each other. Creation where precaution is combined with audacity and which seemed stamped with the genius of Venice.

The central committee, which was at the head, had two arms, the Society of Action, and the Army of the Bastilles.

A legitimist association, the Chevaliers of Fidelity, stirred about among these the republican affiliations. It was denounced and repudiated there.

The Parisian societies had ramifications in the principal cities, Lyons, Nantes, Lille, Marseilles, and each had its Society of the Rights of Man, the Charbonnière, and The Free Men. All had a revolutionary society which was called the Cougourde. We have already mentioned this word.

In Paris, the Faubourg Saint-Marceau kept up an equal buzzing with the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, and the schools were no less moved than the faubourgs. A café in the Rue Saint-Hyacinthe and the wine-shop of the *Seven Billiards*, Rue des Mathurins-Saint-Jacques, served as rallying points for the students. The Society of the Friends of the A B C affiliated to the Mutualists of Angers, and to the Cougourde of Aix, met, as we have seen, in the Café Musain. These same young men assembled also, as we have stated already, in a restaurant wine-shop of the Rue Mondétour which was called Corinthe. These meetings were secret. Others were as public as possible, and the reader can judge of their boldness from these fragments of

an interrogatory undergone in one of the ulterior prosecutions "Where was this meeting held?" "In the Rue de la Paix." "At whose house?" "In the street." "What sections were there?" "Only one." "Which?" "The Manuel section." "Who was its leader?" "I." "You are too young to have decided alone upon the bold course of attacking the government. Where did your instructions come from?" "From the central committee."

The army was mined at the same time as the population, as was proved subsequently by the operations of Bédard, Luneville, and Épinard. They counted on the fifty-second regiment, on the fifth, on the eighth, on the thirty-seventh, and on the twentieth light cavalry. In Burgundy and in the southern towns they planted the liberty tree; that is to say, a pole surmounted by a red cap.

Such was the situation.

The Faubourg Saint-Antoine, more than any other group of the population, as we stated in the beginning, accentuated this situation and made it felt. That was the ~~same~~ point. This old faubourg, peopled like an ant-hill, laborious, courageous, and angry as a hive of bees, was quivering with expectation and with the desire for a tumult. Everything was in a state of agitation there, without any interruption, however, of the regular work. It is impossible to convey an idea of this lively yet sombre physiognomy. In this faubourg exists poignant distress hidden under attic roofs; there also exist rare and ardent minds. It is particularly in the matter of distress and intelligence that it is dangerous to have extremes meet.

The Faubourg Saint-Antoine had also other causes to tremble; for it received the counter-shock of commercial crises, of failures, strikes, slack seasons, all inherent to great political disturbances. In times of revolution misery is both cause and effect. The blow which it deals rebounds upon it. This population full of proud virtue, capable to the highest degree of latent heat, always ready to fly to arms, prompt to explode, irritated, deep, undermined, seemed to be only awaiting the fall of a spark. Whenever certain sparks float on the horizon, chased by the wind of events, it is impossible not to think of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine and of the formidable chance which has placed at the very gates of Paris that powder-house of suffering and ideas.

The wine-shops of the *Faubourg Antoiné*, which have been more than once drawn in the sketches which the reader has just perused, possess historical notoriety. In troublous times peo-

ple grow intoxicated there more on words than on wine. A sort of prophetic spirit and an afflatus of the future circulates there, swelling hearts and enlarging souls. The cabarets of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine resemble those taverns of Mont Aventine erected on the cave of the Sibyl and communicating with the profound and sacred breath; taverns where the tables were almost tripods, and where was drunk what Ennius calls the *sibylline wine*.

The Faubourg Saint-Antoine is a reservoir of people. Revolutionary agitations create fissures there, through which trickles the popular sovereignty. This sovereignty may do evil; it can be mistaken like any other; but, even when led astray, it remains great. We may say of it as of the blind cyclops, *Ingens*.

In '93, according as the idea which was floating about was good or evil, according as it was the day of fanaticism or of enthusiasm, there leaped forth from the Faubourg Saint-Antoine now savage legions, now heroic bands.

Savage. Let us explain this word. When these bristling men, who in the early days of the revolutionary chaos, tattered, howling, wild, with uplifted bludgeon, pike on high, hurled themselves upon ancient Paris in an uproar, what did they want? They wanted an end to oppression, an end to tyranny, an end to the sword, work for men, instruction for the child, social sweetness for the woman, liberty, equality, fraternity. bread for all, the idea for all, the Edenizing of the world. Progress; and that holy, sweet, and good thing, progress, they claimed in terrible wise, driven to extremities as they were, half naked, club in fist, a roar in their mouths. They were savages, yes; but the savages of civilization.

They proclaimed right furiously; they were desirous, if only with fear and trembling, to force the human race to paradise. They seemed barbarians, and they were saviours. They demanded light with the mask of night.

Facing these men, who were ferocious, we admit, and terrifying, but ferocious and terrifying for good ends, there are other men, smiling, embroidered, gilded, beribboned, starred, in silk stockings, in white plumes, in yellow gloves, in varnished shoes, who, with their elbows on a velvet table, beside a marble chimney-piece, insist gently on demeanor and the preservation of the past, of the Middle Ages, of divine right, of fanaticism, of innocence, of slavery, of the death penalty, of war, glorifying in low tones and with politeness, the sword, the stake, and the scaffold. For our part, if we were forced to make a choice be-

tween the barbarians of civilization and the civilized men of barbarism, we should choose the barbarians.

But, thank Heaven, still another choice is possible. No perpendicular fall is necessary, in front any more than in the rear.

Neither despotism nor terrorism. We desire progress with a gentler slope.

God takes care of that. God's whole policy consists in rendering slopes less steep.

VI. — ENJOLRAS AND HIS LIEUTENANTS.

It was about this epoch that Enjolras, in view of a possible catastrophe, instituted a kind of mysterious census.

All were present at a secret meeting at the Café Musain.

Enjolras said, mixing his words with a few half-enigmatical but significant metaphors:—

"It is proper that we should know where we stand and on whom we may count. If combatants are required, they must be provided. It can do no harm to have something with which to strike. Passers-by always have more chance of being gored when there are bulls on the road than when there are none. Let us, therefore, reckon a little on the herd. How many of us are there? There is no question of postponing this task until to-morrow. Revolutionists should always be hurried; progress has no time to lose. Let us mistrust the unexpected. Let us not be caught unprepared. We must go over all the seams that we have made and see whether they hold fast. This business ought to be concluded to-day. Courfeyrac, you will see the polytechnic students. It is their day to go out. To-day is Wednesday. Feuilly, you will see those of the Glacière, will you not? Combeferre has promised me to go to Picpus. There is a perfect swarm and an excellent one there. Bahorel will visit the Estrapade. Prouvaire, the masons are growing lukewarm; you will bring us news from the lodge of the Rue de Grenelle-Saint-Honoré. Joly will go to Dupuytren's clinical lecture, and feel the pulse of the medical school. Bossuet will take a little turn in the court and talk with the young law licentiates. I will take charge of the Cougourde myself."

"That arranges everything," said Courfeyrac.

"No."

"What else is there?"

"A very important thing."

"What is that?" asked Courfeyrac.

"The Barrière du Maine," replied Enjolras.

Enjolras remained for a moment as though absorbed in reflection, then he resumed:—

“At the Barrière du Maine there are marble-workers, painters, and journeymen in the studios of sculptors. They are an enthusiastic family, but liable to cool off. I don’t know what has been the matter with them for some time past. They are thinking of something else. They are becoming extinguished. They pass their time playing dominos. There is urgent need that some one should go and talk with them a little, but with firmness. They meet at Richefeu’s. They are to be found there between twelve and one o’clock. Those ashes must be fanned into a glow. For that errand I had counted on that abstracted Marius, who is a good fellow on the whole, but he no longer comes to us. I need some one for the Barrière du Maine. I have no one.”

“What about me?” said Grantaire. “Here am I.”

“You?”

“I.”

“You indoctrinate republicans! you warm up hearts that have grown cold in the name of principle!”

“Why not?”

“Are you good for anything?”

“I have a vague ambition in that direction,” said Grantaire.

“You do not believe in everything.”

“I believe in you.”

“Grantaire, will you do me a service?”

“Anything. I’ll black your boots.”

“Well, don’t meddle with our affairs. Sleep yourself sober from your absinthe.”

“You are an ingrate, Enjolras.”

“You the man to go to the Barrière du Maine! You capable of it!”

“I am capable of descending the Rue de Grès, of crossing the Place Saint-Michel, of sloping through the Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, of taking the Rue de Vaugirard, of passing the Carmelites, of turning into the Rue d’Assas, of reaching the Rue du Cherche-Midi, of leaving behind me the Conseil de Guerre, of pacing the Rue des Vieilles Tuileries, of striding across the boulevard, of following the Chaussée du Maine, of passing the barrier, and entering Richefeu’s. I am capable of that. My shoes are capable of that.”

“Do you know anything of those comrades who meet at Richefeu’s?”

“Not much. We only address each other as *thou*.”

"What will you say to them?"

"I will speak to them of Robespierre, pardi! Of Danton. Of principles."

"You."

"I. But I don't receive justice. When I set about it, I am terrible. I have read Prudhomme, I know the Social Contract, I know my Constitution of the year Two by heart. 'The liberty of one citizen ends where the liberty of another citizen begins.' Do you take me for a brute? I have an old bank-bill of the Republic in my drawer. The Rights of Man, the sovereignty of the people, sapristi! I am even a bit of a Hébertist. I can talk the most superb twaddle for six hours by the clock, watch in hand."

"Be serious," said Enjolras.

"I am wild," replied Grantaire.

Enjolras meditated for a few moments, and made the gesture of a man who has taken a resolution.

"Grantaire," he said gravely, "I consent to try you. You shall go to the Barrière du Maine."

Grantaire lived in furnished lodgings very near the Café Musain. He went out, and five minutes later he returned. He had gone home to put on a Robespierre waistcoat.

"Red," said he as he entered, and he looked intently at Enjolras. Then, with the palm of his energetic hand, he laid the two scarlet points of the waistcoat across his breast.

And stepping up to Enjolras, he whispered in his ear:—

"Be easy."

He jammed his hat on resolutely and departed.

A quarter of an hour later, the back room of the Café Musain was deserted. All the friends of the A B C were gone, each in his own direction, each to his own task. Enjolras, who had reserved the Cougourde of Aix for himself, was the last to leave.

Those members of the Cougourde of Aix who were in Paris then met on the plain of Issy, in one of the abandoned quarries which are so numerous in that side of Paris.

As Enjolras walked towards this place, he passed the whole situation in review in his own mind. The gravity of events was self-evident. When facts, the premonitory symptoms of latent social malady, move heavily, the slightest complication stops and entangles them. A phenomenon whence arises ruin and new births. Enjolras descried a luminous uplifting beneath the gloomy skirts of the future. Who knows? Perhaps the moment was at hand. The people were again taking possession of right, and what a fine spectacle! The revolution was again

majestically taking possession of France and saying to the world: "The sequel to-morrow!" Enjolras was content. The furnace was being heated. He had at that moment a powder train of friends scattered all over Paris. He composed, in his own mind, with Combeferre's philosophical and penetrating eloquence, Feuilly's cosmopolitan enthusiasm, Courfeyrac's dash, Bahorel's smile, Jean Prouvaire's melancholy, Jolly's science, Bossuet's sarcasms, a sort of electric spark which took fire nearly everywhere at once. All hands to work. Surely, the result would answer to the effort. This was well. This made him think of Grantaire.

"Hold," said he to himself, "the Barrière du Maine will not take me far out of my way. What if I were to go on as far as Richefeu's? Let us have a look at what Grantaire is about, and see how he is getting on."

One o'clock was striking from the Vaugirard steeple when Enjolras reached the Richefeu smoking-room.

He pushed open the door, entered, folded his arms, letting the door fall to and strike his shoulders, and gazed at that room filled with tables, men, and smoke.

A voice broke forth from the mist of smoke, interrupted by another voice. It was Grantaire holding a dialogue with an adversary.

Grantaire was sitting opposite another figure, at a marble Saint-Anne table, strewn with grains of bran and dotted with dominos. He was hammering the table with his fist, and this is what Enjolras heard:—

"Double-six."

"Fours."

"The pig! I have no more."

"You are dead. A two."

"Six."

"Three."

"One."

"It's my move."

"Four points."

"Not much."

"It's your turn."

"I have made an enormous mistake."

"You are doing well."

"Fifteen."

"Seven more."

"That's makes me twenty-two." [Thoughtfully, "Twenty-two!"]

"You weren't expecting that double-six. If I had placed it at the beginning, the whole play would have been changed."

"A two again."

"One."

"One! Well, five."

"I haven't any."

"It was your play, I believe?"

"Yes."

"Blank."

"What luck he has! Ah! You are lucky! [Long revery.] Two."

"One."

"Neither five nor one. That's bad for you."

"Domino."

"Plague take it!"



BOOK SECOND. — ÉPONINE.

I. — THE LARK'S MEADOW.

MARIUS had witnessed the unexpected termination of the ambush upon whose track he had set Javert; but Javert had no sooner quitted the building, bearing off his prisoners in three hackney-coaches, than Marius also glided out of the house. It was only nine o'clock in the evening. Marius betook himself to Courfeyrac. Courfeyrac was no longer the imperturbable inhabitant of the Latin Quarter, he had gone to live in the Rue de la Verrerie "for political reasons"; this quarter was one where, at that epoch, insurrection liked to install itself. Marius said to Courfeyrac: "I have come to sleep with you." Courfeyrac dragged a mattress off his bed, which was furnished with two, spread it out on the floor, and said: "There."

At seven o'clock on the following morning, Marius returned to the hovel, paid the quarter's rent which he owed to Ma'am Bougon, had his books, his bed, his table, his commode, and his two chairs loaded on a hand-cart and went off without leaving his address, so that when Javert returned in the course of the morning, for the purpose of questioning Marius as to the events of the preceding evening, he found only Ma'am Bougon, who answered: "Moved away!"

Ma'am Bougon was convinced that Marius was to some extent an accomplice of the robbers who had been seized the night before. "Who would ever have said it?" she exclaimed to the portresses of the quarter, "a young man like that, who had the air of a girl!"

Marius had two reasons for this prompt change of residence. The first was, that he now had a horror of that house, where he had beheld, so close at hand, and in its most repulsive and most ferocious development, a social deformity which is, perhaps, even more terrible than the wicked rich man, the wicked poor man. The second was, that he did not wish to figure in the lawsuit which would insue in all probability, and be brought in to testify against Thénardier.

Javert thought that the young man, whose name he had forgotten, was afraid, and had fled, or perhaps, had not even returned home at the time of the ambush; he made some efforts to find him, however, but without success.

A month passed, then another. Marius was still with Courfeyrac. He had learned from a young licentiate in law, an habitual frequenter of the courts, that Thénardier was in close confinement. Every Monday, Marius had five francs handed in to the clerk's office of La Force for Thénardier.

As Marius had no longer any money, he borrowed the five francs from Courfeyrac. It was the first time in his life that he had ever borrowed money. These periodical five francs were a double riddle to Courfeyrac who lent and to Thénardier who received them. "To whom can they go?" thought Courfeyrac. "Whence can this come to me?" Thénardier asked himself.

Moreover, Marius was heart-broken. Everything had plunged through a trap-door once more. He no longer saw anything before him; his life was again buried in mystery where he wandered fumblingly. He had for a moment beheld very close at hand, in that obscurity, the young girl whom he loved, the old man who seemed to be her father, those unknown beings, who were his only interest and his only hope in this world; and, at the very moment when he thought himself on the point of grasping them, a gust had swept all these shadows away. Not a spark of certainty and truth had been emitted even in the most terrible of collisions. No conjecture was possible. He no longer knew even the name that he thought he knew. It certainly was not Ursule. And the Lark was a nickname. And what was he to think of the old man? Was he actually in hiding from the police? The white-haired workman whom Marius had encountered in the vicinity of the Invalides

recurred to his mind. It now seemed probable that that workman and M. Leblanc were one and the same person. So he disguised himself? That man had his heroic and his equivocal sides. Why had he not called for help? Why had he fled? Was he, or was he not, the father of the young girl? Was he, in short, the man whom Thénardier thought that he recognized? Thénardier might have been mistaken. These formed so many insoluble problems. All this, it is true, detracted nothing from the angelic charms of the young girl of the Luxembourg. Heart-rending distress; Marius bore a passion in his heart, and night over his eyes. He was thrust onward, he was drawn, and he could not stir. All had vanished, save love. Of love itself he had lost the instincts and the sudden illuminations. Ordinarily, this flame which burns us lights us also a little, and casts some useful gleams without. But Marius no longer even heard these mute counsels of passion. He never said to himself: "What if I were to go to such a place? What if I were to try such and such a thing?" The girl whom he could no longer call Ursule was evidently somewhere; nothing warned Marius in what direction he should seek her. His whole life was now summed up in two words; absolute uncertainty within an impenetrable fog. To see her once again; he still aspired to this, but he no longer expected it.

To crown all, his poverty had returned. He felt that icy breath close to him, on his heels. In the midst of his torments, and long before this, he had discontinued his work, and nothing is more dangerous than discontinued work; it is a habit which vanishes. A habit which is easy to get rid of, and difficult to take up again.

A certain amount of dreaming is good, like a narcotic in discreet doses. It lulls to sleep the fevers of the mind at labor, which are sometimes severe, and produces in the spirit a soft and fresh vapor which corrects the over-harsh contours of pure thought, fills in gaps here and there, binds together and rounds off the angles of the ideas. But too much dreaming sinks and drowns. Woe to the brain-worker who allows himself to fall entirely from thought into revery! He thinks that he can reascend with equal ease, and he tells himself that, after all, it is the same thing. Error!

Thought is the toil of the intelligence, revery is its voluptuousness. To replace thought with revery is to confound a poison with a food.

Marius had begun in that way, as the reader will remember. Passion had supervened and had finished the work of precipitating him into chimæras without object or bottom. One no

onger emerges from one's self except for the purpose of going off to dream. Idle production. Tumultuous and stagnant gulf. And, in proportion as labor diminishes, needs increase. This is a law. Man, in a state of revery, is generally prodigal and slack; the unstrung mind cannot hold life within close bounds.

There is, in that mode of life, good mingled with evil, for if enervation is baleful, generosity is good and healthful. But the poor man who is generous and noble, and who does not work, is lost. Resources are exhausted, needs crop up.

Fatal declivity down which the most honest and the firmest as well as the most feeble and most vicious are drawn, and which ends in one of two holes, suicide or crime.

By dint of going outdoors to think, the day comes when one goes out to throw one's self in the water.

Excess of revery breeds men like Escousse and Lebras.

Marius was descending this declivity at a slow pace, with his eyes fixed on the girl whom he no longer saw. What we have just written seems strange, and yet it is true. The memory of an absent being kindles in the darkness of the heart; the more it has disappeared, the more it beams; the gloomy and despairing soul sees this light on its horizon; the star of the inner night. She — that was Marius' whole thought. He meditated of nothing else; he was confusedly conscious that his old coat was becoming an impossible coat, and that his new coat was growing old, that his shirts were wearing out, that his hat was wearing out, that his boots were giving out, and he said to himself: "If I could but see her once again before I die!"

One sweet idea alone was left to him, that she had loved him, that her glance had told him so, that she did not know his name, but that she did know his soul, and that, wherever she was, however mysterious the place, she still loved him, perhaps. Who knows whether she were not thinking of him as he was thinking of her? Sometimes, in those inexplicable hours such as are experienced by every heart that loves, though he had no reasons for anything but sadness and yet felt an obscure quiver of joy, he said to himself: "It is her thoughts that are coming to me!" Then he added: "Perhaps my thoughts reach her also."

This illusion, at which he shook his head a moment later, was sufficient, nevertheless, to throw beams, which at times resembled hope, into his soul. From time to time, especially at that evening hour which is the most depressing to even the dreamy, he allowed the purest, the most impersonal, the most ideal of the reveries which filled his brain, to fall upon a note-book which contained nothing else. He called this "writing to her."

It must not be supposed that his reason was deranged. Quite the contrary. He had lost the faculty of working and of moving firmly towards any fixed goal, but he was endowed with more clear-sightedness and rectitude than ever. Marius surveyed by a calm and real, although peculiar light, what passed before his eyes, even the most indifferent deeds and men; he pronounced a just criticism on everything with a sort of honest dejection and candid disinterestedness. His judgment, which was almost wholly disassociated from hope, held itself aloof and soared on high.

In this state of mind nothing escaped him, nothing deceived him, and every moment he was discovering the foundation of life, of humanity, and of destiny. Happy, even in the midst of anguish, is he to whom God has given a soul worthy of love and of unhappiness! He who has not viewed the things of this world and the heart of man under this double light has seen nothing and knows nothing of the true.

The soul which loves and suffers is in a state of sublimity.

However, day followed day, and nothing new presented itself. It merely seemed to him, that the sombre space which still remained to be traversed by him was growing shorter with every instant. He thought that he already distinctly perceived the brink of the bottomless abyss.

"What!" he repeated to himself, "shall I not see her again before then!"

When you have ascended the Rue Saint-Jacques, left the barrier on one side and followed the old inner boulevard for some distance, you reach the Rue de la Santé, then the Glacière, and, a little while before arriving at the little river of the Gobelins, you come to a sort of field which is the only spot in the long and monotonous chain of the boulevards of Paris, where Ruysdeel would be tempted to sit down.

There is something indescribable there which exhales grace, a green meadow traversed by tightly stretched lines, from which flutter rags drying in the wind, and an old market-gardener's house, built in the time of Louis XIII., with its great roof oddly pierced with dormer windows, dilapidated palisades, a little water amid poplar-trees, women, voices, laughter; on the horizon the Panthéon, the pole of the Deaf-Mutes, the Val-de-Grâce, black, squat, fantastic, amusing, magnificent, and in the background, the severe square crests of the towers of Notre Dame.

As the place is worth looking at, no one goes thither. Hardly one cart or wagoner passes in a quarter of an hour.

It chanced that Marius' solitary strolls led him to this plot of ground, near the water. That day, there was a rarity on the boulevard, a passer-by. Marius, vaguely impressed with the almost savage beauty of the place, asked this passer-by:—"What is the name of this spot?"

The person replied: "It is the Lark's meadow."

And he added: "It was here that Ulbach killed the shepherdess of Ivry."

But after the word 'Lark' Marius heard nothing more. These sudden congealments in the state of reverie, which a single word suffices to evoke, do occur. The entire thought is abruptly condensed around an idea, and it is no longer capable of perceiving anything else.

The Lark was the appellation which had replaced Ursule in the depths of Marius' melancholy.—"Stop," said he with a sort of unreasoning stupor peculiar to these mysterious asides, "this is her meadow. I shall know where she lives now."

It was absurd, but irresistible.

And every day he returned to that meadow of the Lark.

II.—EMBRYONIC FORMATION OF CRIMES IN THE INCUBATION OF PRISONS.

JAVERT's triumph in the Gorbeau hovel seemed complete, but had not been so.

In the first place, and this constituted the principal anxiety, Javert had not taken the prisoner prisoner. The assassinated man who flees is more suspicious than the assassin, and it is probable that this personage, who had been so precious a capture for the ruffians, would be no less fine a prize for the authorities.

And then, Montparnasse had escaped Javert.

Another opportunity of laying hands on that "devil's dandy" must be waited for. Montparnasse had, in fact, encountered Éponine as she stood on the watch under the trees of the boulevard, and had led her off, preferring to play Nemorin with the daughter rather than Schinderhannes with the father. It was well that he did so. He was free. As for Éponine, Javert had caused her to be seized; a mediocre consolation. Éponine had joined Azelma at Les Madelonettes.

And finally, on the way from the Gorbeau house to La Force, one of the principal prisoners, Claquesous, had been lost. It was not known how this had been effected, the police agents and the sergeants "could not understand it at all." He had

converted himself into vapor, he had slipped through the hand cuffs, he had trickled through the crevices of the carriage, the fiacre was cracked, and he had fled; all that they were able to say was, that on arriving at the prison, there was no Claquesous. Either the fairies or the police had had a hand in it. Had Claquesous melted into the shadows like a snow-flake in water? Had there been unavowed connivance of the police agents? Did this man belong to the double enigma of order and disorder? Was he concentric with infraction and repression? Had this sphinx his fore paws in crime and his hind paws in authority? Javert did not accept such comminations, and would have bristled up against such compromises; but his squad included other inspectors besides himself, who were more initiated than he, perhaps, although they were his subordinates in the secrets of the Prefecture, and Claquesous had been such a villain that he might make a very good agent. It is an excellent thing for ruffianism and an admirable thing for the police to be on such intimate juggling terms with the night. These double-edged rascals do exist. However that may be, Claquesous had gone astray and was not found again. Javert appeared to be more irritated than amazed at this.

As for Marius, "that booby of a lawyer," who had probably become frightened, and whose name Javert had forgotten, Javert attached very little importance to him. Moreover, a lawyer can be hunted up at any time. But was he a lawyer after all?

The investigation had begun.

The magistrate had thought it advisable not to put one of these men of the band of Patron Minette in close confinement, in the hope that he would chatter. This man was Brujon, the long-haired man of the Rue du Petit-Banquier. He had been let loose in the Charlemagne courtyard, and the eyes of the watchers were fixed on him.

This name of Brujon is one of the souvenirs of La Force. In that hideous courtyard, called the court of the Bâtiment-Neuf (New Building), which the administration called the court Saint-Bernard, and which the robbers called the Fosse-aux-Lions (The Lions' Ditch), on that wall covered with scales and leprosy, which rose on the left to a level with the roofs, near an old door of rusty iron which led to the ancient chapel of the ducal residence of La Force, then turned in a dormitory for ruffians, there could still be seen, twelve years ago, a sort of fortress roughly carved in the stone with a nail, and beneath it this signature:—

BRUJON, 1811.

The Brujon of 1811 was the father of the Brujon of 1832.

The latter, of whom the reader caught but a glimpse at the Gorbeau house, was a very cunning and very adroit young spark, with a bewildered and plaintive air. It was in consequence of this plaintive air that the magistrate had released him, thinking him more useful in the Charlemagne yard than in close confinement.

Robbers do not interrupt their profession because they are in the hands of justice. They do not let themselves be put out by such a trifle as that. To be in prison for one crime is no reason for not beginning on another crime. They are artists, who have one picture in the salon, and who toil, none the less, on a new work in their studios.

Brujon seemed to be stupefied by prison. He could sometimes be seen standing by the hour together in front of the sutler's window in the Charlemagne yard, staring like an idiot at the sordid list of prices which began with: *garlic*, 62 *centimes*, and ended with: *cigar*, 5 *centimes*. Or he passed his time in trembling, chattering his teeth, saying that he had a fever, and inquiring whether one of the eight and twenty beds in the fever ward was vacant.

All at once, towards the end of February, 1832, it was discovered that Brujon, that somnolent fellow, had had three different commissions executed by the errand-men of the establishment, not under his own name, but in the name of three of his comrades; and they had cost him in all fifty sous, an exorbitant outlay which attracted the attention of the prison corporal.

Inquiries were instituted, and on consulting the tariff of commissions posted in the convicts' parlor, it was learned that the fifty sous could be analyzed as follows: three commission; one to the Panthéon, ten sous; one to Val-de-Grâce, fifteen sous; and one to the Barrière de Grenelle, twenty-five sous. This last was the dearest of the whole tariff. Now, at the Panthéon, at the Val-de-Grâce, and at the Barrière de Grenelle were situated the domiciles of the three very redoubtable prowlers of the barriers, Kruideniers, alias Bizarro, Glorieux, an ex-convict, and Barre-Carosse, upon whom the attention of the police was directed by this incident. It was thought that these men were members of Patron Minette; two of those leaders, Babet and Gueulemer had been captured. It was supposed that the messages, which had been addressed, not to houses, but to people who were waiting for them in the street, must have contained information with regard to some crime that had been plotted. They were in possession of other indications; they

laid hand on the three prowlers, and supposed that they had circumvented some one or other of Brujon's machinations.

About a week after these measures had been taken, one night, as the superintendent of the watch, who had been inspecting the lower dormitory in the Bâtiment-Neuf, was about to drop his chestnut in the box — this was the means adopted to make sure that the watchmen performed their duties punctually ; every hour a chestnut must be dropped into all the boxes nailed to the doors of the dormitories — a watchman looked through the peep-hole of the dormitory and beheld Brujon sitting on his bed and writing something by the light of the hall-lamp. The guardian entered, Brujon was put in a solitary cell for a month, but they were not able to seize what he had written. The police learned nothing further about it.

What is certain is, that on the following morning, a "postilion" was flung from the Charlemagne yard into the Lions' Ditch, over the five-story building which separated the two courtyards.

What prisoners call a "postilion" is a pallet of bread artistically moulded, which is sent *into Ireland*, that is to say, over the roofs of a prison, from one courtyard to another. Etymology : over England ; from one land to another ; *into Ireland*. This little pellet falls in the yard. The man who picks it up opens it and finds in it a note addressed to some prisoner in that yard. If it is a prisoner who finds the treasure, he forwards the note to its destination ; if it is a keeper, or one of the prisoners secretly sold who are called *sheep* in prisons and *foxes* in the galleys, the note is taken to the office and handed over to the police.

On this occasion, the postilion reached its address, although the person to whom it was addressed was, at that moment, in solitary confinement. This person was no other than Babet, one of the four heads of Patron Minette.

The postilion contained a roll of paper on which only these two lines were written : —

"Babet. There is an affair in the Rue Plumet. A gate on a garden."

This is what Brujon had written the night before.

In spite of male and female searchers, Babet managed to pass the note on from La Force to the Salpêtrière, to a "good friend" whom he had and who was shut up there. This woman in turn transmitted the note to another woman of her acquaintance, a certain Magnon, who was strongly suspected by the police, though not yet arrested. This Magnon, whose name the

reader has already seen, had relations with the Thénardier, which will be described in detail later on, and she could, by going to see Éponine, serve as a bridge between the Salpêtrière and Les Madelonnettes.

It happened, that at precisely that moment, as proofs were wanting in the investigation directed against Thénardier in the matter of his daughters, Éponine and Azelma were released. When Éponine came out, Magnon, who was watching the gate of the Madelonnettes, handed her Brujon's note to Babet, charging her to look into the matter.

Éponine went to the Rue Plumet, recognized the gate and the garden, observed the house, spied, lurked, and, a few days later, brought to Magnon, who delivers in the Rue Clocheperce, a biscuit, which Magnon transmitted to Babet's mistress in the Salpêtrière. A biscuit, in the shady symbolism of prisons, signifies: Nothing to be done.

So that in less than a week from that time, as Brujon and Babet met in the circle of La Force, the one on his way to the examination, the other on his way from it:—

“Well?” asked Brujon, “the Rue P.?”

“Biscuit,” replied Babet. Thus did the fœtus of crime engendered by Brujon in La Force miscarry.

This miscarriage had its consequences, however, which were perfectly distinct from Brujon's programme. The reader will see what they were.

Often when we think we are knotting one thread, we are tying quite another.

III. — APPARITION TO FATHER MABEUF.

MARIUS no longer went to see any one, but he sometimes encountered Father Mabeuf by chance.

While Marius was slowly descending those melancholy steps which may be called the cellar stairs, and which lead to places without light, where the happy can be heard walking overhead, M. Mabeuf was descending on his side.

The *Flora of Caunteretz* no longer sold at all. The experiments on indigo had not been successful in the little garden of Austerlitz, which had a bad exposure. M. Mabeuf could cultivate there only a few plants which love shade and dampness. Nevertheless, he did not become discouraged. He had obtained a corner in the Jardin de Plantes, with a good exposure, to make his trials with indigo “at his own expense.” For this purpose he had pawned his copperplates of the *Flora*. He had

reduced his breakfast to two eggs, and he left one of these for his old servant, to whom he had paid no wages for the last fifteen months. And often his breakfast was his only meal. He no longer smiled with his infantile smile, he had grown morose and no longer received visitors. Marius did well not to dream of going thither. Sometimes, at the hour when M. Mabeuf was on his way to the Jardin des Plantes, the old man and the young man passed each other on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital. They did not speak, and only exchanged a melancholy sign of the head. A heart-breaking thing it is that there comes a moment when misery looses bonds! Two men who have been friends become two chance passers-by.

Royol the bookseller was dead. M. Mabeuf no longer knew his books, his garden, or his indigo: these were the three forms which happiness, pleasure, and hope had assumed for him. This sufficed him for his living. He said to himself: "When I shall have made my balls of blueing, I shall be rich, I will withdraw my copperplates from the pawn-shop, I will put my *Flora* in vogue again with trickery, plenty of money, and advertisements in the newspapers and I will buy, I know well where, a copy of Pierre de Médine's *Art de Naviguer*, with wood-cuts, edition of 1655." In the meantime, he toiled all day over his plot of indigo, and at night he returned home to water his garden, and to read his books. At that epoch, M. Mabeuf was nearly eighty years of age.

One evening he had a singular apparition.

He had returned home while it was still broad daylight. Mother Plutarque, whose health was declining, was ill and in bed. He had dined on a bone, on which a little meat lingered, and a bit of bread that he had found on the kitchen table, and had seated himself on an overturned stone post, which took the place of a bench in his garden.

Near this bench there rose, after the fashion in orchard-gardens, a sort of large chest, of beams and planks, much dilapidated, a rabbit-hutch on the ground floor, a fruit-closet on the first. There was nothing in the hutch, but there were a few apples in the fruit-closet,—the remains of the winter's provision.

M. Mabeuf had set himself to turning over and reading, with the aid of his glasses, two books of which he was passionately fond and in which, a serious thing at his age, he was interested. His natural timidity rendered him accessible to the acceptance of superstitions in a certain degree. The first of these books was the famous treatise of President Delancre, *De l'Inconstance*

des Démons; the other was a quarto by Mutor de la Rubaudière, *Sur les Diables de Vauvert et les Gobelins de la Bièvre*. This last-mentioned old volume interested him all the more, because his garden had been one of the spots haunted by goblins in former times. The twilight had begun to whiten what was on high and to blacken all below. As he read, over the top of the book which he held in his hand, Father Mabeuf was surveying his plants, and among others a magnificent rhododendron which was one of his consolations; four days of heat, wind, and sun without a drop of rain, had passed; the stalks were bending, the buds drooping, the leaves falling; all this needed water, the rhododendron was particularly sad. Father Mabeuf was one of those persons for whom plants have souls. The old man had toiled all day over his indigo plot, he was worn out with fatigue, but he rose, laid his books on the bench, and walked, all bent over and with tottering footsteps to the well, but when he had grasped the chain, he could not even draw it sufficiently to unhook it. Then he turned round and cast a glance of anguish toward heaven which was becoming studded with stars.

The evening had that serenity which overwhelms the troubles of man beneath an indescribably mournful and eternal joy. The night promised to be as arid as the day had been.

"Stars everywhere!" thought the old man; "not the tiniest cloud! Not a drop of water!"

And his head, which had been upraised for a moment, fell back upon his breast.

He raised it again, and once more looked at the sky, murmuring:—

"A tear of dew! A little pity!"

He tried again to unhook the chain of the well, and could not.

At that moment, he heard a voice saying:—

"Father Mabeuf, would you like to have me water your garden for you?"

At the same time, a noise as of a wild animal passing became audible in the hedge, and he beheld emerging from the shrubbery a sort of tall, slender girl, who drew herself up in front of him and stared boldly at him. She had less the air of a human being than of a form which had just blossomed forth from the twilight.

Before Father Mabeuf, who was easily terrified, and who was, as we have said, quick to take alarm, was able to reply by a single syllable, this being, whose movements had a sort of odd abruptness in the darkness, had unhooked the chain, plunged

in and withdrawn the bucket, and filled the watering-pot, and the goodman beheld this apparition, which had bare feet and a tattered petticoat, running about among the flower-beds distributing life around her. The sound of the watering-pot on the leaves filled Father Mabeuf's soul with ecstasy. It seemed to him that the rhododendron was happy now.

The first bucketful emptied, the girl drew second, then a third. She watered the whole garden.

There was something about her, as she thus ran about among paths, where her outline appeared perfectly black, waving her angular arms, and with her fichu all in rags, that resembled a bat.

When she had finished, Father Mabeuf approached her with tears in his eyes, and laid his hand on her brow.

"God will bless you," said he, "you are an angel since you take care of the flowers."

"No," she replied. "I am the devil, but that's all the same to me."

The old man exclaimed, without either waiting for or hearing her response:—

"What a pity that I am so unhappy and so poor, and that I can do nothing for you!"

"You can do something," said she.

"What?"

"Tell me where M. Marius lives."

The old man did not understand. "What Monsieur Marius?"

He raised his glassy eyes and seemed to be seeking something that had vanished.

"A young man who used to come here."

In the meantime, M. Mabeuf had searched his memory.

"Ah! yes—" he exclaimed. "I know what you mean. Wait! Monsieur Marius—the Baron Marius Pontmercy, *par bleu!* He lives,—or rather, he no longer lives,—ah well, I don't know."

As he spoke, he had bent over to train a branch of rhododendron, and he continued:—

"Hold, I know now. He very often passes along the boulevard, and goes in the direction of the Glacière, Rue Croulebarbe. The meadow of the Lark. Go there. It is not hard to meet him."

When M. Mabeuf straightened himself up, there was no longer any one there; the girl had disappeared.

He was decidedly terrified.

"Really," he thought, "if my garden had not been watered, I should think that she was a spirit."

An hour later, when he was in bed, it came back to him, and as he fell asleep, at that confused moment when thought, like that fabulous bird which changes itself into a fish in order to cross the sea, little by little assumes the form of a dream in order to traverse slumber, he said to himself in a bewildered way:—

"In sooth, that greatly resembles what Rubaudière narrates of the goblins. Could it have been a goblin?"

IV.—AN APPARITION TO MARIUS.

SOME days after this visit of a "spirit" to Farmer Mabeuf, one morning, — it was on a Monday, the day when Marius borrowed the hundred-sou piece from Courfeyrac for Thénardier, — Marius had put this coin in his pocket, and before carrying it to the clerk's office, he had gone "to take a little stroll," in the hope that this would make him work on his return. It was always thus, however. As soon as he rose, he seated himself before a book and a sheet of paper in order to scribble some translation; his task at that epoch consisted in turning into French a celebrated quarrel between Germans, the Gans and Savigny controversy; he took Savigny, he took Gans, read four lines, tried to write one, could not, saw a star between him and his paper, and rose from his chair, saying: "I shall go out. That will put me in spirits."

And off he went to the Lark's meadow.

There he beheld more than ever the star, and less than ever Savigny and Gans.

He returned home, tried to take up his work again, and did not succeed; there was no means of re-knotting a single one of the threads which were broken in his brain; then he said to himself: "I will not go out to-morrow. It prevents my working." And he went out every day.

He lived in the Lark's meadow more than in Courfeyrac's lodgings. That was his real address: Boulevard de la Santé, at the seventh tree from the Rue Croulebarbe.

That morning he had quitted the seventh tree, and had seated himself on the parapet of the River des Gobelins. A cheerful sunlight penetrated the freshly unfolded and luminous leaves.

He was dreaming of "Her." And his meditation turning to a reproach, fell back upon himself; he reflected dolefully on his idleness, his paralysis of soul, which was gaining on him, and of that night which was growing more dense every

moment before him, to such a point that he no longer even saw the sun.

Nevertheless, athwart this painful extrication of indistinct ideas which was not even a monologue, so feeble had action become in him, and he had no longer the force to care to despair, athwart this melancholy absorption, sensations from without did reach him. He heard behind him, beneath him, on both banks of the river, the laundresses of the Gobelins beating their linen, and above his head, the birds chattering and singing in the elm-trees. On the one hand, the sound of liberty, the careless happiness of the leisure which has wings; on the other, the sound of toil. What caused him to meditate deeply, and almost reflect, were two cheerful sounds.

All at once, in the midst of his dejected ecstasy, he heard a familiar voice saying:—

“Come! Here he is!”

He raised his eyes, and recognized that wretched child who had come to him one morning, the elder of the Thénardier daughters, Éponine; he knew her name now. Strange to say, she had grown poorer and prettier, two steps which it had not seemed within her power to take. She had accomplished a double progress, towards the light and towards distress. She was barefooted and in rags, as on the day when she had so resolutely entered his chamber, only her rags were two months older now, the holes were larger, the tatters more sordid. It was the same harsh voice, the same brow dimmed and wrinkled with tan, the same free, wild, and vacillating glance. She had besides, more than formerly, in her face that indescribably terrified and lamentable something which sojourn in a prison adds to wretchedness.

She had bits of straw and hay in her hair, not like Ophelia through having gone mad from the contagion of Hamlet's madness, but because she had slept in the loft of some stable.

And in spite of it all, she was beautiful. What a star art thou, O youth!

In the meantime, she had halted in front of Marius with a trace of joy on her livid countenance, and something which resembled a smile.

She stood for several moments as though incapable of speech.

“So I have met you at last!” she said at length. “Father Mabeuf was right, it was on this boulevard! How I have hunted for you! If you only knew! Do you know? I have been in the jug. A fortnight! They let me out! seeing that

there was nothing against me, and that, moreover, I had not reached years of discretion. I lack two months of it. Oh! how I have hunted for you! These six weeks! So you don't live down there any more?"

"No," said Marius.

"Ah! I understand. Because of that affair. Those take-downs are disagreeable. You cleared out. Come now! Why do you wear old hats like this! A young man like you ought to have fine clothes. Do you know, Monsieur Marius, Father Mabeuf calls you Baron Marius, I don't know what. It isn't true that you are a baron? Barons are old fellows, they go to the Luxembourg, in front of the chateau, where there is the most sun, and they read the *Quotidienne* for a sou. I once carried a letter to a baron of that sort. He was over a hundred years old. Say, where do you live now?"

Marius made no reply.

"Ah!" she went on, "you have a hole in your shirt. I must sew it up for you."

She resumed with an expression which gradually clouded over:—

"You don't seem glad to see me."

Marius held his peace; she remained silent for a moment, then exclaimed:—

"But if I choose, nevertheless, I could force you to look glad!"

"What?" demanded Marius. "What do you mean?"

"Ah! you used to call me *thou*," she retorted.

"Well, then, what dost thou mean?"

She bit her lip; she seemed to hesitate, as though a prey to some sort of inward conflict. At last she appeared to come to a decision.

"So much the worse, I don't care. You have a melancholy air, I want you to be pleased. Only promise me that you will smile. I want to see you smile and hear you say: 'Ah! well, that's good.' Poor Mr. Marius! you know? You promised me that you would give me anything I liked —"

"Yes! Only speak!"

She looked Marius full in the eye, and said:—

"I have the address."

Marius turned pale. All the blood flowed back to his heart.

"What address?"

"The address that you asked me to get!"

She added, as though with an effort:—

"The address — you know very well!"

"Yes!" stammered Marius.

"Of that young lady."

This word uttered, she sighed deeply.

Marius sprang from the parapet on which he had been sitting and seized her hand distractedly.

"Oh! Well! lead me thither! Tell me! Ask of me anything you wish! Where is it?"

"Come with me," she responded. "I don't know the street or number very well; it is in quite the other direction from here, but I know the house well, I will take you to it."

She withdrew her hand and went on, in a tone which could have rent the heart of an observer, but which did not even graze Marius in his intoxicated and ecstatic state:—

"Oh! how glad you are!"

A cloud swept across Marius' brow. He seized Éponine by the arm:—

"Swear one thing to me!"

"Swear!" said she, "what does that mean? Come! You want me to swear?"

And she laughed.

"Your father! promise me, Éponine! Swear to me that you will not give this address to your father!"

She turned to him with a stupefied air.

"Éponine! How do you know that my name is Éponine?"

"Promise what I tell you!"

But she did not seem to hear him.

"That's nice! You have called me Éponine!"

Marius grasped both her arms at once.

"But answer me, in the name of Heaven! pay attention to what I am saying to you, swear to me that you will not tell your father this address that you know!"

"My father!" said she. "Ah yes, my father! Be at ease. He's in close confinement. Besides, what do I care for my father!"

"But you do not promise me!" exclaimed Marius.

"Let go of me!" she said, bursting into a laugh, "how you do shake me! Yes! Yes! I promise that! I swear that to you! What is that to me? I will not tell my father the address. There! Is that right? Is that it?"

"Nor to any one?" said Marius.

"Nor to any one."

"Now," resumed Marius, "take me there."

"Immediately?"

"Immediately."

"Come along. Ah! how pleased he is!" said she.

After a few steps she halted.

"You are following me too closely, Monsieur Marius. Let me go on ahead, and follow me so, without seeming to do it. A nice young man like you must not be seen with a woman like me."

No tongue can express all that lay in that word, *woman*, thus pronounced by that child.

She proceeded a dozen paces and then halted once more; Marius joined her. She addressed him sideways and without turning towards him:—

"By the way, you know that you promised me something?"

Marius fumbled in his pocket. All that he owned in the world was the five francs intended for Thénardier the father. He took them and laid them in Éponine's hand.

She opened her fingers and let the coin fall to the ground, and gazed at him with a gloomy air.

"I don't want your money," said she.



BOOK THIRD. — THE HOUSE IN THE RUE PLUMET.

I. — THE HOUSE WITH A SECRET.

ABOUT the middle of the last century, a chief justice in the Parliament of Paris having a mistress and concealing the fact, for at that period the grand seignors displayed their mistresses, and the bourgeois concealed them, had "a little house" built in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, in the deserted Rue Blomet, which is now called Rue Plumet, not far from the spot which was then designated as *Combat des Animaux*.

This house was composed of a single-storied pavilion; two rooms on the ground floor, two chambers on the first floor, a kitchen down stairs, a boudoir up stairs, an attic under the roof, the whole preceded by a garden with a large gate opening on the street. This garden was about an acre and a half in extent. This was all that could be seen by passers-by; but behind the pavilion there was a narrow courtyard, and at the end of the courtyard a low building consisting of two rooms and a cellar, a sort of preparation destined to conceal a child and nurse in case of need. This building communicated in the rear by a masked

door which opened by a secret spring, with a long, narrow, paved winding corridor, open to the sky, hemmed in with two lofty walls, which, hidden with wonderful art, and lost as it were between garden enclosures and cultivated land, all of whose angles and detours it followed, ended in another door, also with a secret lock which opened a quarter of a league away, almost in another quarter, at the solitary extremity of the Rue du Babylone.

Through this the chief justice entered, so that even those who were spying on him and following him would merely have observed that the justice betook himself every day in a mysterious way somewhere, and would never have suspected that to go to the Rue de Babylone was to go to the Rue Blomet. Thanks to clever purchasers of land, the magistrate had been able to make a secret, sewer-like passage on his own property, and consequently, without interference. Later on, he had sold in little parcels, for gardens and market gardens, the lots of ground adjoining the corridor, and the proprietors of these lots on both sides thought they had a party wall before their eyes, and did not even suspect the long, paved ribbon winding between two walls amid their flower-beds and their orchards. Only the birds beheld this curiosity. It is probable that the linnets and tomtits of the last century gossiped a great deal about the chief justice.

The pavilion, built of stone in the taste of Mansard, wainscoted and furnished in the Watteau style, rocaille on the inside, old-fashioned on the outside, walled in with a triple hedge of flowers, had something discreet, coquettish, and solemn about it, as befits a caprice of love and magistracy.

This house and corridor, which have now disappeared, were in existence fifteen years ago. In '93 a coppersmith had purchased the house with the idea of demolishing it, but had not been able to pay the price; the nation made him bankrupt. So that it was the house which demolished the coppersmith. After that, the house remained uninhabited, and fell slowly to ruin, as does every dwelling to which the presence of man does not communicate life. It had remained fitted with its old furniture, was always for sale or to let, and the ten or a dozen people who passed through the Rue Plumet were warned of the fact by a yellow and illegible bit of writing which had hung on the garden wall since 1819.

Towards the end of the Restoration, these same passers-by might have noticed that the bill had disappeared, and even that the shutters on the first floor were open. The house was occu-

pied, in fact. The windows had short curtains, a sign that there was a woman about.

In the month of October, 1829, a man of a certain age had presented himself and had hired the house just as it stood, including, of course, the back building and the lane which ended in the Rue de Babylone. He had had the secret openings of the two doors to this passage repaired. The house, as we have just mentioned, was still very nearly furnished with the justice's old fitting; the new tenant had ordered some repairs, had added what was lacking here and there, had replaced the paving-stones in the yard, bricks in the floors, steps in the stairs, missing bits in the inlaid floors and the glass in the lattice windows, and had finally installed himself there with a young girl and an elderly maid-servant, without commotion, rather like a person who is slipping in than like a man who is entering his own house. The neighbors did not gossip about him, for the reason that there were no neighbors.

This unobtrusive tenant was Jean Valjean, the young girl was Cosette. The servant was a woman named Toussaint, whom Jean Valjean had saved from the hospital and from wretchedness, and who was elderly, a stammerer, and from the provinces, three qualities which had decided Jean Valjean to take her with him. He had hired the house under the name of M. Fauchelevent, independent gentleman. In all that has been related heretofore, the reader has, doubtless, been no less prompt than Thénardier to recognize Jean Valjean.

Why had Jean Valjean quitted the convent of the Petit-Picpus? What had happened?

Nothing had happened.

It will be remembered that Jean Valjean was happy in the convent, so happy that his conscience finally took the alarm. He saw Cosette every day, he felt paternity spring up and develop within him more and more, he brooded over the soul of that child, he said to himself that she was his, that nothing could take her from him, that this would last indefinitely, that she would certainly become a nun, being thereto gently incited every day, that thus the convent was henceforth the universe for her as it was for him, that he should grow old there, and that she would grow up there, that she would grow old there, and that he should die there; that, in short, delightful hope, no separation was possible. On reflecting upon this, he fell into perplexity. He interrogated himself. He asked himself if all that happiness were really his, if it were not composed of the happiness of another, of the happiness of that child which he,

an old man, was confiscating and stealing; if that were not theft? He said to himself, that this child had a right to know life before renouncing it, that to deprive her in advance, and in some sort without consulting her, of all joys, under the pretext of saving her from all trials, to take advantage of her ignorance of her isolation, in order to make an artificial vocation germinate in her, was to rob a human creature of its nature and to lie to God. And who knows if, when she came to be aware of all this some day, and found herself a nun to her sorrow, Cosette would not come to hate him? A last, almost selfish thought, and less heroic than the rest, but which was intolerable to him. He resolved to quit the convent.

He resolved on this; he recognized with anguish, the fact that it was necessary. As for objections, there were none. Five years' sojourn between these four walls and of disappearance had necessarily destroyed or dispersed the elements of fear. He could return tranquilly among men. He had grown old, and all had undergone a change. Who would recognize him now? And then, to face the worst, there was danger only for himself, and he had no right to condemn Cosette to the cloister for the reason that he had been condemned to the galleys. Besides, what is danger in comparison with the right? Finally, nothing prevented his being prudent and taking his precautions.

As for Cosette's education, it was almost finished and complete.

His determination once taken, he awaited an opportunity. It was not long in presenting itself. Old Fauchelevent died.

Jean Valjean demanded an audience with the revered prioress and told her that, having come into a little inheritance at the death of his brother, which permitted him henceforth to live without working, he should leave the service of the convent and take his daughter with him; but that, as it was not just that Cosette, since she had not taken the vows, should have received her education gratuitously, he humbly begged the Reverend Prioress to see fit that he should offer to the community, as indemnity, for the five years which Cosette had spent there, the sum of five thousand francs.

It was thus that Jean Valjean quitted the convent of the Perpetual Adoration.

On leaving the convent, he took in his own arms the little valise the key to which he still wore on his person, and would permit no porter to touch it. This puzzled Cosette, because of the odor of embalming which proceeded from it.

Let us state at once, that this trunk never quitted him more. He always had it in his chamber. It was the first and only

thing sometimes, that he carried off in his moving when he moved about. Cosette laughed at it, and called this valise *his inseparable*, saying: "I am jealous of it."

Nevertheless, Jean Valjean did not reappear in the open air without profound anxiety.

He discovered the house in the Rue Plumet, and hid himself from sight there. Henceforth, he was in the possession of the name:—*Ultime Fauchelevent*.

At the same time, he hired two other apartments in Paris, in order that he might attract less attention than if he were to remain always in the same quarter, and so that he could, at need, take himself off at the slightest disquietude which should assail him, and in short, so that he might not again be caught unprovided as on the night when he had so miraculously escaped from Javert. These two apartments were very pitiable, poor in appearance, and in two quarters which were far remote from each other, the one in the Rue de l'Ouest, the other in the Rue de l'Homme Armé.

He went from time to time, now to the Rue de l'Homme Armé, now to the Rue de l'Ouest, to pass a month or six weeks, without taking Toussaint. He had himself served by the porters, and gave himself out as a gentleman from the suburbs, living on his funds, and having a little temporary resting-place in town. This lofty virtue had three domiciles in Paris for the sake of escaping from the police.

II.—JEAN VALJEAN AS A NATIONAL GUARD.

HOWEVER, properly speaking, he lived in the Rue Plumet, and he had arranged his existence there in the following fashion:—

Cosette and the servant occupied the pavilion; she had the big sleeping-room with the painted pier-glasses, the boudoir with the gilded fillets, the justice's drawing-room furnished with tapestries and vast arm-chairs; she had the garden. Jean Valjean had a canopied bed of antique damask in three colors and a beautiful Persian rug purchased in the Rue du Figuier-Saint-Paul at Mother Gaucher's, put into Cosette's chamber, and, in order to redeem the severity of these magnificent old things, he had amalgamated with this bric-à-brac all the gay and graceful little pieces of furniture suitable to young girls, an *étagère*, a bookcase filled with gilt-edged books, an inkstand, a blotting-book, paper, a work-table incrustated with mother of pearl, a silver-gilt dressing-case, a toilet service in Japanese porce-

lain. Long damask curtains with a red foundation and three colors, like those on the bed, hung at the windows of the first floor. On the ground floor, the curtains were of tapestry. All winter long, Cosette's little house was heated from top to bottom. Jean Valjean inhabited the sort of porter's lodge which was situated at the end of the back courtyard, with a mattress on a folding-bed, a white wood table, two straw chairs, an earthenware water-jug, a few old volumes on a shelf, his beloved valise in one corner, and never any fire. He dined with Cosette, and he had a loaf of black bread on the table for his own use.

When Toussaint came, he had said to her: "It is the young lady who is the mistress of this house."—"And you, monsieur?" Toussaint had replied in amazement.—"I am a much better thing than the master, I am the father."

Cosette had been taught housekeeping in the convent, and she regulated their expenditure, which was very modest. Every day, Jean Valjean put his arm through Cosette's and took her for a walk. He led her to the Luxembourg, to the least frequented walk, and every Sunday he took her to mass at Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas, because that was a long way off. As it was a very poor quarter, he bestowed alms largely there, and the poor people surrounded him in church, which had drawn down upon him Thénardier's epistle: "To the benevolent gentleman of the church of Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas." He was fond of taking Cosette to visit the poor and the sick. No stranger ever entered the house in the Rue Plumet. Toussaint brought their provisions, and Jean Valjean went himself for water to a fountain near by on the boulevard. Their wood and wine were put into a half-subterranean hollow lined with rock-work which lay near the Rue de Babylone and which had formerly served the chief-justice as a grotto; for at the epoch of follies and "Little Houses" no love was without a grotto.

In the door opening on the Rue de Babylone, there was a box destined for the reception of letters and papers; only, as the three inhabitants of the pavilion in the Rue Plumet received neither papers nor letters, the entire usefulness of that box, formerly the go-between of a love affair, and the confidant of a love-lorn lawyer, was now limited to the tax-collector's notices, and the summons of the guard. For M. Fauchelevent, independent gentleman, belonged to the national guard; he had not been able to escape through the fine meshes of the census of 1831. The municipal information collected at that time had even reached the convent of the Petit-Picpus, a sort of impenetrable and holy cloud, whence Jean Valjean had emerged in

venerable guise, and, consequently, worthy of mounting guard in the eyes of the town-hall.

Three or four times a year, Jean Valjean donned his uniform and mounted guard; he did this willingly, however; it was a correct disguise which mixed him with every one, and yet left him solitary. Jean Valjean had just attained his sixtieth birthday, the age of legal exemption; but he did not appear to be over fifty; moreover, he had no desire to escape his sergeant-major nor to quibble with Comte de Lobau; he possessed no civil status, he was concealing his name, he was concealing his identity, so he concealed his age, he concealed everything; and, as we have just said, he willingly did his duty as a national guard; the sum of his ambition lay in resembling any other man who paid his taxes. This man had for his ideal, within, the angel, without, the bourgeois.

Let us note one detail, however; when Jean Valjean went out with Cosette, he dressed as the reader has already seen, and had the air of a retired officer. When he went out alone, which was generally at night, he was always dressed in a workingman's trousers and blouse, and wore a cap which concealed his face. Was this precaution or humility? Both. Cosette was accustomed to the enigmatical side of her destiny, and hardly noticed her father's peculiarities. As for Toussaint, she venerated Jean Valjean, and thought everything he did right.

One day, her butcher, who had caught a glimpse of Jean Valjean, said to her: "That's a queer fish." She replied: "He's a saint."

Neither Jean Valjean nor Cosette nor Toussaint ever entered or emerged except by the door on the Rue de Babylone. Unless seen through the garden gate it would have been difficult to guess that they lived in the Rue Plumet. That gate was always closed. Jean Valjean had left the garden uncultivated, in order not to attract attention.

In this, possibly, he made a mistake.

III. — FOLIIS AC FRONDIBUS.

THE garden thus left to itself for more than half a century had become extraordinary and charming. The passers-by of forty years ago halted to gaze at it, without a suspicion of the secrets which it hid in its fresh and verdant depths. More than one dreamer of that epoch often allowed his thoughts and his eyes to penetrate indiscreetly between the bars of that ancient, padlocked gate, twisted, tottering, fastened to two

green and moss-covered pillars, and oddly crowned with a pediment of undecipherable arabesque.

There was a stone bench in one corner, one or two mouldy statues, several lattices which had lost their nails with time, were rotting on the wall, and there were no walks nor turf; but there was enough grass everywhere. Gardening had taken its departure, and nature had returned. Weeds abounded, which was a great piece of luck for a poor corner of land. The festival of gilliflowers was something splendid. Nothing in this garden obstructed the sacred effort of things towards life; venerable growth reigned there among them. The trees had bent over towards the nettles, the plant had sprung upward, the branch had inclined, that which crawls on the earth had gone in search of that which expands in the air, that which floats on the wind had bent over towards that which trails in the moss; trunks, boughs, leaves, fibres, clusters, tendrils, shoots, spines, thorns, had mingled, crossed, married, confounded themselves in each other; vegetation in a deep and close embrace, had celebrated and accomplished there, under the well-pleased eye of the Creator, in that enclosure three hundred feet square, the holy mystery of fraternity, symbol of the human fraternity. This garden was no longer a garden, it was a colossal thicket, that is to say, something as impenetrable as a forest, as peopled as a city, quivering like a nest, sombre like a cathedral, fragrant like a bouquet, solitary as a tomb, living as a throng.

In Floréal¹ this enormous thicket, free behind its gate and within its four walls, entered upon the secret labor of germination, quivered in the rising sun, almost like an animal which drinks in the breaths of cosmic love, and which feels the sap of April rising and boiling in its veins, and shakes to the wind its enormous wonderful green locks, sprinkled on the damp earth, on the defaced statues, on the crumbling steps of the pavilion, and even on the pavement of the deserted street, flowers like stars, dew like pearls, fecundity, beauty, life, joy, perfumes. At midday, a thousand white butterflies took refuge there, and it was a divine spectacle to see that living summer snow whirling about there in flakes amid the shade. There, in those gay shadows of verdure, a throng of innocent voices spoke sweetly to the soul, and what the twittering forgot to say the humming completed. In the evening, a dreamy vapor exhaled from the garden and enveloped it; a shroud of mist, a calm and celestial sadness covered it; the intoxicating perfume of the honeysuckles and convolvulus poured out from every part of

¹ From April 19 to May 20.

it, like an exquisite and subtle poison ; the last appeals of the woodpeckers and the wagtails were audible as they dozed among the branches ; one felt the sacred intimacy of the birds and the trees ; by day the wings rejoice the leaves, by night the leaves protect the wings.

In winter the thicket was black, dripping, bristling, shivering, and allowed some glimpse of the house. Instead of flowers on the branches and dew in the flowers, the long silvery tracks of the snails were visible on the cold, thick carpet of yellow leaves ; but in any fashion, under any aspect, at all seasons, spring, winter, summer, autumn, this tiny enclosure breathed forth melancholy, contemplation, solitude, liberty, the absence of man, the presence of God ; and the rusty old gate had the air of saying : " This garden belongs to me."

It was of no avail that the pavements of Paris were there on every side, the classic and splendid hotels of the Rue de Varennes a couple of paces away, the dome of the Invalides close at hand, the Chamber of Deputies not far off ; the carriages of the Rue de Bourgogne and of the Rue Saint-Dominique rumbled luxuriously, in vain, in the vicinity, in vain did the yellow, brown, white, and red omnibuses cross each other's course at the neighboring cross-roads ; the Rue Plunnet was the desert ; and the death of the former proprietors, the revolution which had passed over it, the crumbling away of ancient fortunes, absence, forgetfulness, forty years of abandonment and widowhood, had sufficed to restore to this privileged spot ferns, mulleins, hemlock, yarrow, tall weeds, great crimped plants, with large leaves of pale green cloth, lizards, beetles, uneasy and rapid insects ; to cause to spring forth from the depths of the earth and to reappear between these four walls a certain indescribable and savage grandeur ; and for nature, which disconcerts the petty arrangements of man, and which sheds herself always thoroughly where she diffuses herself at all, in the ant as well as in the eagle, to blossom out in a petty little Parisian garden with as much rude force and majesty as in a virgin forest of the New World.

Nothing is small, in fact ; any one who is subject to the profound and penetrating influence of nature knows this. Although no absolute satisfaction is given to philosophy, either to circumscribe the cause or to limit the effect, the contemplator falls into those unfathomable ecstasies caused by these decompositions of force terminating in unity. Everything toils at everything.

Algebra is applied to the clouds ; the radiation of the star profits the rose ; no thinker would venture to affirm that the

perfume of the hawthorn is useless to the constellations. Who, then, can calculate the course of a molecule? How do we know that the creation of worlds is not determined by the fall of grains of sand? Who knows the reciprocal ebb and flow of the infinitely great and the infinitely little, the reverberations of causes in the precipices of being, and the avalanches of creation? The tiniest worm is of importance; the great is little, the little is great; everything is balanced in necessity; alarming vision for the mind. There are marvellous relations between beings and things; in that inexhaustible whole, from the sun to the grub, nothing despises the other; all have need of each other. The light does not bear away terrestrial perfumes into the azure depths, without knowing what it is doing; the night distributes stellar essences to the sleeping flowers. All birds that fly have round their leg the thread of the infinite. Germination is complicated with the bursting forth of a meteor and with the peck of a swallow cracking its egg, and it places on one level the birth of an earthworm and the advent of Socrates. Where the telescope ends, the microscope begins. Which of the two possesses the larger field of vision? Choose. A bit of mould is a pleiad of flowers; a nebula is an ant-hill of stars. The same promiscuousness, and yet more unprecedented, exists between the things of the intelligence and the facts of substance. Elements and principles mingle, combine, wed, multiply, with each other, to such a point that the material and the moral world are brought eventually to the same clearness. The phenomenon is perpetually returning upon itself. In the vast cosmic exchanges the universal life goes and comes in unknown quantities, rolling entirely in the invisible mystery of effluvia, employing everything, not losing a single dream, not a single slumber, sowing an animalcule here, crumbling to bits a planet there, oscillating and winding, making of light a force and of thought an element, disseminated and invisible, dissolving all, except that geometrical point, the *I*; bringing everything back to the soul-atom; expanding everything in God, entangling all activity, from summit to base, in the obscurity of a dizzy mechanism, attaching the flight of an insect to the movement of the earth, subordinating, who knows? Were it only by the identity of the law, the evolution of the comet in the firmament to the whirling of the infusoria in the drop of water. A machine made of mind. Enormous gearing, the prime motor of which is the gnat, and whose final wheel is the zodiac.

IV. — CHANGE OF GATE.

It seemed that this garden, created in olden days to conceal wanton mysteries, had been transformed and become fitted to shelter chaste mysteries. There were no longer either arbors, or bowling greens, or tunnels, or grottos; there was a magnificent, dishevelled obscurity falling like a veil over all. Paphos had been made over into Eden. It is impossible to say what element of repentance had rendered this retreat wholesome. This flower-girl now offered her blossom to the soul. This coquettish garden, formerly decidedly compromised, had returned to virginity and modesty. A justice assisted by a gardener, a goodman who thought that he was a continuation of Lamoignon, and another goodman who thought that he was a continuation of Lenôtre, had turned it about, cut, ruffled, decked, moulded it to gallantry; nature had taken possession of it once more, had filled it with shade, and had arranged it for love.

There was, also, in this solitude, a heart which was quite ready. Love had only to show himself; he had here a temple composed of verdure, grass, moss, the sight of birds, tender shadows, agitated branches, and a soul made of sweetness, of faith, of candor, of hope, of aspiration, and of illusion.

Cosette had left the convent when she was still almost a child; she was a little more than fourteen, and she was at the "ungrateful age"; we have already said, that with the exception of her eyes, she was homely rather than pretty; she had no ungraceful feature, but she was awkward, thin, timid and bold at once, a grown-up little girl, in short.

Her education was finished, that is to say, she has been taught religion, and even and above all, devotion; then "history," that is to say the thing that bears that name in convents, geography, grammar, the participles, the kings of France, a little music, a little drawing, etc.; but in all other respects she was utterly ignorant, which is a great charm and a great peril. The soul of a young girl should not be left in the dark; later on, mirages that are too abrupt and too lively are formed there, as in a dark chamber. She should be gently and discreetly enlightened, rather with the reflection of realities than with their harsh and direct light. A useful and graciously austere half-light which dissipates puerile fears and obviates falls. There is nothing but the maternal instinct, that admirable intuition composed of the memories of the virgin and the experience of the woman,

which knows how this half-light is to be created and of what it should consist.

Nothing supplies the place of this instinct. All the nuns in the world are not worth as much as one mother in the formation of a young girl's soul.

Cosette had had no mother. She had only had many mothers, in the plural.

As for Jean Valjean, he was, indeed, all tenderness, all solicitude ; but he was only an old man and he knew nothing at all.

Now, in this work of education, in this grave matter of preparing a woman for life, what science is required to combat that vast ignorance which is called innocence !

Nothing prepares a young girl for passions like the convent. The convent turns the thoughts in the direction of the unknown. The heart, thus thrown back upon itself, works downward within itself, since it cannot overflow, and grows deep, since it cannot expand. Hence visions, suppositions, conjectures, outlines of romances, a desire for adventures, fantastic constructions, edifices built wholly in the inner obscurity of the mind, sombre and secret abodes where the passions immediately find a lodgement as soon as the open gate permits them to enter. The convent is a compression which, in order to triumph over the human heart, should last during the whole life.

On quitting the convent, Cosette could have found nothing more sweet and more dangerous than the house in the Rue Plumet. It was the continuation of solitude with the beginning of liberty ; a garden that was closed, but a nature that was acrid, rich, voluptuous, and fragrant ; the same dreams as in the convent, but with glimpses of young men ; a grating, but one that opened on the street.

Still, when she arrived there, we repeat, she was only a child. Jean Valjean gave this neglected garden over to her. "Do what you like with it," he said to her. This amused Cosette ; she turned over all the clumps and all the stones, she hunted for "beasts" ; she played in it, while awaiting the time when she would dream in it ; she loved this garden for the insects that she found beneath her feet amid the grass, while awaiting the day when she would love it for the stars that she would see through the boughs above her head.

And then, she loved her father, that is to say, Jean Valjean, with all her soul, with an innocent filial passion which made the goodman a beloved and charming companion to her. It will be remembered that M. Madeleine had been in the habit of reading a great deal. Jean Valjean had continued this practice ; he

had come to converse well; he possessed the secret riches and the eloquence of a true and humble mind which has spontaneously cultivated itself. He retained just enough sharpness to season his kindness; his mind was rough and his heart was soft. During their conversations in the Luxembourg, he gave her explanations of everything, drawing on what he had read, and also on what he had suffered. As she listened to him, Cosette's eyes wandered vaguely about.

This simple man sufficed for Cosette's thought, the same as the wild garden sufficed for her eyes. When she had had a good chase after the butterflies, she came panting up to him and said; "Ah! How I have run!" He kissed her brow.

Cosette adored the goodman. She was always at his heels. Where Jean Valjean was, there happiness was. Jean Valjean lived neither in the pavilion nor the garden; she took greater pleasure in the paved back courtyard, than in the enclosure filled with flowers, and in his little lodge furnished with straw-seated chairs than in the great drawing-room hung with tapestry, against which stood tufted easy-chairs. Jean Valjean sometimes said to her, smiling at his happiness in being importuned: "Do go to your own quarters! Leave me alone a little!"

She gave him those charming and tender scoldings which are so graceful when they come from a daughter to her father.

"Father, I am very cold in your rooms; why don't you have a carpet here and a stove?"

"Dear child, there are so many people who are better than I and who have not even a roof over their heads."

"Then why is there a fire in my rooms, and everything that is needed?"

"Because you are a woman and a child."

"Bah! must men be cold and feel uncomfortable?"

"Certain men."

"That is good, I shall come here so often that you will be obliged to have a fire."

And again she said to him:—

"Father, why do you eat horrible bread like that?"

"Because, my daughter."

"Well, if you eat it, I will eat it too."

Then in order to prevent Cosette eating black bread, Jean Valjean ate white bread.

Cosette had but a confused recollection of her childhood. She prayed morning and evening for her mother whom she had never known. The Thénardiens had remained with her as two hideous figures in a dream. She remembered that she had gone

“one day, at night” to fetch water in a forest. She thought that it had been very far from Paris. It seemed to her that she had begun to live in an abyss, and that it was Jean Valjean who had rescued her from it. Her childhood produced upon her the effect of a time when there had been nothing around her but millepedes, spiders, and serpents. When she meditated in the evening, before falling asleep, as she had not a very clear idea that she was Jean Valjean’s daughter, and that he was her father, she fancied that the soul of her mother had passed into that good man and had come to dwell near her.

When he was seated, she leaned her cheek against his white hair, and dropped a silent tear, saying to herself: “Perhaps this man is my mother.”

Cosette, although this is a strange statement to make, in the profound ignorance of a girl brought up in a convent, — maternity being also absolutely unintelligible to virginity, — had ended by fancying that she had had as little mother as possible. She did not even know her mother’s name. Whenever she asked Jean Valjean, Jean Valjean remained silent. If she repeated her question, he responded with a smile. Once she insisted; the smile ended in a tear.

This silence on the part of Jean Valjean covered Fantine with darkness.

Was it prudence? Was it respect? Was it a fear that he should deliver this name to the hazards of another memory than his own?

So long as Cosette had been small, Jean Valjean had been willing to talk to her of her mother; when she became a young girl, it was impossible for him to do so. It seemed to him that he no longer dared. Was it because of Cosette? Was it because of Fantine? He felt a certain religious horror at letting that shadow enter Cosette’s thought; and of placing a third in their destiny. The more sacred this shade was to him, the more did it seem that it was to be feared. He thought of Fantine, and felt himself overwhelmed with silence.

Through the darkness, he vaguely perceived something which appeared to have its finger on its lips. Had all the modesty which had been in Fantine, and which had violently quitted her during her lifetime, returned to rest upon her after her death, to watch in indignation over the peace of that dead woman, and in its shyness, to keep her in her grave? Was Jean Valjean unconsciously submitting to the pressure? We who believe in death, are not among the number who will reject this mysterious explanation.

Hence the impossibility of uttering, even for Cosette, that name of Fantine.

One day Cosette said to him:—

“Father, I saw my mother in a dream last night. She had two big wings. My mother must have been almost a saint during her life.”

“Through martyrdom,” replied Jean Valjean.

However, Jean Valjean was happy.

When Cosette went out with him, she leaned on his arm, proud and happy, in the plenitude of her heart. Jean Valjean felt his heart melt within him with delight, at all these sparks of a tenderness so exclusive, so wholly satisfied with himself alone. The poor man trembled, inundated with angelic joy: he declared to himself ecstatically that this would last all their lives; he told himself that he really had not suffered sufficiently to merit so radiant a bliss, and he thanked God, in the depths of his soul, for having permitted him to be loved thus, he, a wretch, by that innocent being.

V.—THE ROSE PERCEIVES THAT IT IS AN ENGINE OF WAR.

ONE day, Cosette chanced to look at herself in her mirror, and she said to herself: “Really!” it seemed to her almost that she was pretty. This threw her in a singularly troubled state of mind. Up to that moment she had never thought of her face. She saw herself in her mirror, but she did not look at herself. And then, she had so often been told that she was homely; Jean Valjean alone said gently: “No indeed! no indeed!” At all events, Cosette had always thought herself homely, and had grown up in that belief with the easy resignation of childhood. And here, all at once, was her mirror saying to her, as Jean Valjean had said: “No indeed!” That night, she did not sleep. “What if I were pretty!” she thought. “How odd it would be if I were pretty!” And she recalled those of her companions whose beauty had produced a sensation in the convent, and she said to herself: “What! Am I to be like Mademoiselle So-and-So!”

The next morning she looked at herself again, not by accident this time, and she was assailed with doubts: “Where did I get such an idea?” said she; “no, I am ugly.” She had not slept well, that was all, her eyes were sunken and she was pale. She had not felt very joyous on the preceding evening in the belief that she was beautiful, but it made her very sad **not to be able to believe in it any longer.** She did not look at

herself again, and for more than a fortnight, she tried to dress her hair with her back turned to the mirror.

In the evening, after dinner, she generally embroidered in wool or did some convent needlework in the drawing-room, and Jean Valjean read beside her. Once she raised her eyes from her work, and was rendered quite uneasy by the manner in which her father was gazing at her.

On another occasion, she was passing along the street, and it seemed to her that some one behind her, whom she did not see, said: "A pretty woman! but badly dressed." "Bah!" she thought, "he does not mean me. I am well dressed and ugly." She was then wearing a plush hat and her merino gown.

At last, one day when she was in the garden, she heard poor old Toussaint saying: "Do you notice how pretty Cosette is growing, sir?" Cosette did not hear her father's reply, but Toussaint's words caused a sort of commotion within her. She fled from the garden, ran up to her room, flew to the looking-glass, — it was three months since she had looked at herself, — and gave vent to a cry. She had just dazzled herself.

She was beautiful and lovely; she could not help agreeing with Toussaint and her mirror. Her figure was formed, her skin had grown white, her hair was lustrous, an unaccustomed splendor had been lighted in her blue eyes. The consciousness of her beauty burst upon her in an instant, like the sudden advent of daylight; other people noticed it also, Toussaint had said so, it was evidently she of whom the passer-by had spoken, there could no longer be any doubt of that; she descended to the garden again, thinking herself a queen, imagining that she heard the birds singing, though it was winter, seeing the sky gilded, the sun among the trees, flowers in the thickets, distracted, wild, in inexpressible delight.

Jean Valjean, on his side, experienced a deep and undefinable oppression at heart.

In fact, he had, for some time past, been contemplating with terror that beauty which seemed to grow more radiant every day on Cosette's sweet face. The dawn that was smiling for all was gloomy for him.

Cosette had been beautiful for a tolerably long time before she became aware of it herself. But, from the very first day, that unexpected light which was rising slowly and enveloping the whole of the young girl's person, wounded Jean Valjean's sombre eye. He felt that it was a change in a happy life, a life so happy that he did not dare to move for fear of disarranging something. This man, who had passed through all manner

of distresses, who was still all bleeding from the bruises of fate, who had been almost wicked and who had become almost a saint, who, after having dragged the chain of the galleys, was now dragging the invisible but heavy chain of indefinite misery, this man whom the law had not released from its grasp and who could be seized at any moment and brought back from the obscurity of his virtue to the broad daylight of public opprobrium, this man accepted all, excused all, pardoned all, and merely asked of Providence, of man, of the law, of society, of nature, of the world, one thing, that Cosette might love him!

That Cosette might continue to love him! That God would not prevent the heart of the child from coming to him, and from remaining with him! Beloved by Cosette, he felt that he was healed, rested, appeased, loaded with benefits, recompensed, crowned. Beloved by Cosette, it was well with him! He asked nothing more! Had any one said to him: "Do you want anything better?" he would have answered: "No." God might have said to him: "Do you desire heaven?" and he would have replied: "I should lose by it."

Everything which could affect this situation, if only on the surface, made him shudder like the beginning of something new. He had never known very distinctly himself what the beauty of a woman means; but he understood, instinctively, that it was something terrible.

He gazed with terror on this beauty, which was blossoming out ever more triumphant and superb beside him, beneath his very eyes, on the innocent and formidable brow of that child, from the depths of her homeliness, of his old age, of his misery, of his reprobation.

He said to himself: "How beautiful she is! What is to become of me?"

There, moreover, lay the difference between his tenderness and the tenderness of a mother. What he beheld with anguish, a mother would have gazed upon with joy.

The first symptoms were not long in making their appearance.

On the very morrow of the day on which she had said to herself: "Decidedly I am beautiful!" Cosette began to pay attention to her toilet. She recalled the remark of that passer-by: "Pretty, but badly dressed," the breath of an oracle which had passed beside her and had vanished, after depositing in her heart one of the two germs which are destined, later on, to fill the whole life of woman, coquetry. Love is the other.

With faith in her beauty, the whole feminine soul expanded within her. She conceived a horror for her merinos, and shame

for her plush hat. Her father had never refused her anything. She at once acquired the whole science of the bonnet, the gown, the mantle, the boot, the cuff, the stuff which is in fashion, the color which is becoming, that science which makes of the Parisian woman something so charming, so deep, and so dangerous. The words *heady woman* were invented for the Parisienne.

In less than a month, little Cosette, in that Thebaid of the Rue de Babylone was not only one of the prettiest, but one of the "best dressed" women in Paris, which means a great deal more.

She would have liked to encounter her "passer-by," to see what he would say, and to "teach him a lesson!" The truth is, that she was ravishing in every respect, and that she distinguished the difference between a bonnet from Gérard and one from Herbaut in the most marvellous way.

Jean Valjean watched these ravages with anxiety. He who felt that he could never do anything but crawl, walk at the most, beheld wings sprouting on Cosette.

Moreover, from the mere inspection of Cosette's toilet, a woman would have recognized the fact that she had no mother. Certain little proprieties, certain special conventionalities, were not observed by Cosette. A mother, for instance, would have told her that a young girl does not dress in damask.

The first day that Cosette went out in her black damask gown and mantle, and her white crape bonnet, she took Jean Valjean's arm, gay, radiant, rosy, proud, dazzling. "Father," she said, "how do you like me in this guise?" Jean Valjean replied in a voice which resembled the bitter voice of an envious man: "Charming!" He was the same as usual during their walk. On their return home, he asked Cosette:—

"Won't you put on that other gown and bonnet again,—you know the ones I mean?"

This took place in Cosette's chamber. Cosette turned towards the wardrobe where her cast-off schoolgirl's clothes were hanging.

"That disguise!" said she. "Father, what do you want me to do with it? Oh no, the idea! I shall never put on those horrors again. With that machine on my head, I have the air of Madame Mad-dog."

Jean Valjean heaved a deep sigh.

From that moment forth, he noticed that Cosette, who had always heretofore asked to remain at home, saying: "Father, I enjoy myself more here with you," now was always asking to go out. In fact, what is the use of having a handsome face and a delicious costume if one does not display them?

He also noticed that Cosette had no longer the same taste for the back garden. Now she preferred the garden, and did not dislike to promenade back and forth in front of the railed fence. Jean Valjean, who was shy, never set foot in the garden. He kept to his back yard, like a dog.

Cosette, in gaining the knowledge that she was beautiful, lost the grace of ignoring it. An exquisite grace, for beauty enhanced by ingenuousness is ineffable, and nothing is so adorable as a dazzling and innocent creature who walks along, holding in her hand the key to paradise without being conscious of it. But what she had lost in ingenuous grace, she gained in pensive and serious charm. Her whole person, permeated with the joy of youth, of innocence, and of beauty, breathed forth a splendid melancholy.

It was at this epoch that Marius, after the lapse of six months, saw her once more at the Luxembourg.

VI.—THE BATTLE BEGUN.

Cosette in her shadow, like Marius in his, was all ready to take fire. Destiny, with its mysterious and fatal patience, slowly drew together these two beings, all charged and all languishing with the stormy electricity of passion, these two souls which were laden with love as two clouds are laden with lightning, and which were bound to overflow and mingle in a look like the clouds in a flash of fire.

The glance has been so much abused in love romances that it has finally fallen into disrepute. One hardly dares to say, nowadays, that two beings fell in love because they looked at each other. That is the way people do fall in love, nevertheless, and the only way. The rest is nothing, but the rest comes afterwards. Nothing is more real than these great shocks which two souls convey to each other by the exchange of that spark.

At that particular hour when Cosette unconsciously darted that glance which troubled Marius, Marius had no suspicion that he had also launched a look which disturbed Cosette.

He caused her the same good and the same evil.

She had been in the habit of seeing him for a long time, and she had scrutinized him as girls scrutinize and see, while looking elsewhere. Marius still considered Cosette ugly, when she had already begun to think Marius handsome. But as he paid no attention to her, the young man was nothing to her.

Still, she could not refrain from saying to herself that he had

beautiful hair, beautiful eyes, handsome teeth, a charming tone of voice when she heard him conversing with his comrades, that he held himself badly when he walked, if you like, but with a grace that was all his own, that he did not appear to be at all stupid, that his whole person was noble, gentle, simple, proud, and that, in short, though he seemed to be poor, yet his air was fine.

On the day when their eyes met at last, and said to each other those first, obscure, and ineffable things which the glance lips, Cosette did not immediately understand. She returned thoughtfully to the house in the Rue de l'Ouest, where Jean Valjean, according to his custom, had come to spend six weeks. The next morning, on waking, she thought of that strange young man, so long indifferent and icy, who now seemed to pay attention to her, and it did not appear to her that this attention was the least in the world agreeable to her. She was, on the contrary, somewhat incensed at this handsome and disdainful individual. A substratum of war stirred within her. It struck her, and the idea caused her a wholly childish joy, that she was going to take her revenge at last.

Knowing that she was beautiful, she was thoroughly conscious, though in an indistinct fashion, that she possessed a weapon. Women play with their beauty as children do with a knife. They wound themselves.

The reader will recall Marius' hesitations, his palpitations, his terrors. He remained on his bench and did not approach. This vexed Cosette. One day, she said to Jean Valjean: "Father, let us stroll about a little in that direction." Seeing that Marius did not come to her, she went to him. In such cases, all women resemble Mahomet. And then, strange to say, the first symptom of true love in a young man is timidity; in a young girl it is boldness. This is surprising, and yet nothing is more simple. It is the two sexes tending to approach each other and assuming, each the other's qualities.

That day, Cosette's glance drove Marius beside himself, and Marius' glance set Cosette to trembling. Marius went away confident, and Cosette uneasy. From that day forth, they adored each other.

The first thing that Cosette felt was a confused and profound melancholy. It seemed to her that her soul had become black since the day before. She no longer recognized it. The whiteness of soul in young girls, which is composed of coldness and gayety, resembles snow. It melts in love, which is its sun.

Cosette did not know what love was. She had never heard

the word uttered in its terrestrial sense. On the books of profane music which entered the convent, *amour* (love) was replaced by *tambour* (drum) or *pandour*. This created enigmas which exercised the imaginations of the *big girls*, such as: *Ah, how delightful is the drum!* or, *Pity is not a pandour*. But Cosette had left the convent too early to have occupied herself much with the "drum." Therefore, she did not know what name to give to what she now felt. Is any one the less ill because one does not know the name of one's malady?

She loved with all the more passion because she loved ignorantly. She did not know whether it was a good thing or a bad thing, useful or dangerous, eternal or temporary, allowable or prohibited; she loved. She would have been greatly astonished, had any one said to her: "You do not sleep? But that is forbidden! You do not eat? Why, that is very bad! You have oppressions and palpitations of the heart! That must not be! You blush and turn pale, when a certain being clad in black appears at the end of a certain green walk? But that is abominable!" She would not have understood, and she would have replied: "What fault is there of mine in a matter in which I have no power and of which I know nothing?"

It turned out that the love which presented itself was exactly suited to the state of her soul. It was a sort of admiration at a distance, a mute contemplation, the deification of a stranger. It was the apparition of youth to youth, the dream of nights become a reality yet remaining a dream, the longed-for phantom realized and made flesh at last, but having as yet, neither name, nor fault, nor spot, nor exigence, nor defect; in a word, the distant lover who lingered in the ideal, a chimæra with a form. Any nearer and more palpable meeting would have alarmed Cosette at this first stage, when she was still half immersed in the exaggerated mists of the cloister. She had all the fears of children and all the fears of nuns combined. The spirit of the convent, with which she had been permeated for the space of five years, was still in the process of slow evaporation from her person, and made everything tremble around her. In this situation he was not a lover, he was not even an admirer, he was a vision. She set herself to adoring Marius as something charming, luminous, and impossible.

As extreme innocence borders on extreme coquetry, she smiled at him with all frankness.

Every day, she looked forward to the hour for their walk

with impatience, she found Marius there, she felt herself unspeakably happy, and thought in all sincerity that she was expressing her whole thought when she said to Jean Valjean:—

“What a delicious garden that Luxembourg is!”

Marius and Cosette were in the dark as to one another. They did not address each other, they did not salute each other, they did not know each other; they saw each other; and like stars of heaven which are separated by millions of leagues, they lived by gazing at each other.

It was thus that Cosette gradually became a woman and developed, beautiful and loving, with a consciousness of her beauty, and in ignorance of her love. She was a coquette to boot through her ignorance.

VII. — TO ONE SADNESS OPPOSE A SADNESS AND A HALF.

ALL situations have their instincts. Old and eternal Mother Nature warned Jean Valjean in a dim way of the presence of Marius. Jean Valjean shuddered to the very bottom of his soul. Jean Valjean saw nothing, knew nothing, and yet he scanned with obstinate attention, the darkness in which he walked, as though he felt on one side of him something in process of construction, and on the other, something which was crumbling away. Marius, also warned, and, in accordance with the deep law of God, by that same Mother Nature, did all he could to keep out of sight of “the father.” Nevertheless, it came to pass that Jean Valjean sometimes espied him. Marius’ manners were no longer in the least natural. He exhibited ambiguous prudence and awkward daring. He no longer came quite close to them as formerly. He seated himself at a distance and pretended to be reading; why did he pretend that? Formerly he had come in his old coat, now he wore his new one every day; Jean Valjean was not sure that he did not have his hair curled, his eyes were very queer, he wore gloves; in short, Jean Valjean cordially detested this young man.

Cosette allowed nothing to be divined. Without knowing just what was the matter with her she was convinced that there was something in it, and that it must be concealed.

There was a coincidence between the taste for the toilet which had recently come to Cosette, and the habit of new clothes developed by that stranger which was very repugnant to Jean Valjean. It might be accidental, no doubt, certainly, but it was a menacing accident.

He never opened his mouth to Cosette about this stranger. One day, however, he could not refrain from so doing, and, with that vague despair which suddenly casts the lead into the depths of its despair, he said to her: "What a very pedantic air that young man has!"

Cosette, but a year before only an indifferent little girl, would have replied: "Why, no, he is charming." Ten years later, with the love of Marius in her heart, she would have answered: "A pedant, and insufferable to the sight! You are right!"—At the moment in life and the heart which she had then attained, she contented herself with replying, with supreme calmness: "That young man!"

As though she now beheld him for the first time in her life.

"How stupid I am!" thought Jean Valjean. "She had not noticed him. It is I who have pointed him out to her."

Oh, simplicity of the old! oh, the depth of children!

It is one of the laws of those fresh years of suffering and trouble, of those vivacious conflicts between a first love and the first obstacles, that the young girl does not allow herself to be caught in any trap whatever, and that the young man falls into every one. Jean Valjean had instituted an undeclared war against Marius, which Marius, with the sublime stupidity of his passion and his age, did not divine. Jean Valjean laid a host of ambushes for him; he changed his hour, he changed his bench, he forgot his handkerchief, he came alone to the Luxembourg; Marius dashed headlong into all these snares; and to all the interrogation marks planted by Jean Valjean in his pathway, he ingenuously answered "yes." But Cosette remained immured in her apparent unconcern and in her imperturbable tranquillity, so that Jean Valjean arrived at the following conclusion: "That ninny is madly in love with Cosette, but Cosette does not even know that he exists."

None the less did he bear in his heart a mournful tremor. The minute when Cosette would love might strike at any moment. Does not everything begin with indifference?

Only once did Cosette make a mistake and alarm him. He rose from his seat to depart, after a stay of three hours, and she said: "What, already?"

Jean Valjean had not discontinued his trips to the Luxembourg, as he did not wish to do anything out of the way, and as, above all things, he feared to arouse Cosette; but during the hours which were so sweet to the lovers, while Cosette was sending her smile to the intoxicated Marius, who perceived nothing else now, and who now saw nothing in all the world but ar

adored and radiant face, Jean Valjean was fixing on Marius flashing and terrible eyes. He, who had finally come to believe himself incapable of a malevolent feeling, experienced moments when Marius was present, in which he thought he was becoming savage and ferocious once more, and he felt the old depths of his soul, which had formerly contained so much wrath, opening once more and rising up against that young man. It almost seemed to him that unknown craters were forming in his bosom.

What! he was there, that creature! What was he there for? He came creeping about, smelling out, examining, trying! He came, saying: "Hey! Why not?" He came to prowl about his, Jean Valjean's, life! to prowl about his happiness, with the purpose of seizing it and bearing it away!

Jean Valjean added: "Yes, that's it! What is he in search of? An adventure! What does he want? A love affair! A love affair! And I? What! I have been first, the most wretched of men, and then the most unhappy, and I have traversed sixty years of life on my knees, I have suffered everything that man can suffer, I have grown old without having been young, I have lived without a family, without relatives, without friends, without life, without children, I have left my blood on every stone, on every bramble, on every mile-post, along every wall, I have been gentle, though others have been hard to me, and kind, although others have been malicious, I have become an honest man once more, in spite of everything, I have repented of the evil that I have done and have forgiven the evil that has been done to me, and at the moment when I receive my recompense, at the moment when it is all over, at the moment when I am just touching the goal, at the moment when I have what I desire, it is well, it is good, I have paid, I have earned it, all this is to take flight, all this will vanish, and I shall lose Cosette, and I shall lose my life, my joy, my soul, because it has pleased a great booby to come and lounge at the Luxembourg."

Then his eyes were filled with a sad and extraordinary gleam.

It was no longer a man gazing at a man; it was no longer an enemy surveying an enemy. It was a dog scanning a thief.

The reader knows the rest. Marius pursued his senseless course. One day he followed Cosette to the Rue de l'Ouest. Another day he spoke to the porter. The porter, on his side, spoke, and said to Jean Valjean: "Monsieur, who is that curious young man who is asking for you?" On the morrow

Jean Valjean bestowed on Marius that glance which Marius at last perceived. A week later, Jean Valjean had taken his departure. He swore to himself that he would never again set foot either in the Luxembourg or in the Rue de l'Ouest. He returned to the Rue Plumet.

Cosette did not complain, she said nothing, she asked no questions, she did not seek to learn his reasons; she had already reached the point where she was afraid of being divined, and of betraying herself. Jean Valjean had no experience of these miseries, the only miseries which are charming and the only ones with which he was not acquainted; the consequence was that he did not understand the grave significance of Cosette's silence.

He merely noticed that she had grown sad, and he grew gloomy. On his side and on hers, inexperience had joined issue.

Once he made a trial. He asked Cosette:—

“Would you like to come to the Luxembourg?”

A ray illuminated Cosette's pale face.

“Yes,” said she.

They went thither. Three months had elapsed. Marius no longer went there. Marius was not there.

On the following day, Jean Valjean asked Cosette again:—

“Would you like to come to the Luxembourg?”

She replied, sadly and gently:—

“No.”

Jean Valjean was hurt by this sadness, and heart-broken at this gentleness.

What was going on in that mind which was so young and yet already so impenetrable? What was on its way there within? What was taking place in Cosette's soul? Sometimes, instead of going to bed, Jean Valjean remained seated on his pallet, with his head in his hands, and he passed whole nights asking himself: “What has Cosette in her mind?” and in thinking of the things that she might be thinking about.

Oh! at such moments, what mournful glances did he cast towards that cloister, that chaste peak, that abode of angels, that inaccessible glacier of virtue! How he contemplated, with despairing ecstasy, that convent garden, full of ignored flowers and cloistered virgins, where all perfumes and all souls mount straight to heaven! How he adored that Eden forever closed against him, whence he had voluntarily and madly emerged! How he regretted his abnegation and his folly in having brought Cosette back into the world, poor hero of sacrifice, seized and hurled to

the earth by his very self-devotion ! How he said to himself : " What have I done ? "

However, nothing of all this was perceptible to Cosette. No ill-temper, no harshness. His face was always serene and kind. Jean Valjean's manners were more tender and more paternal than ever. If anything could have betrayed his lack of joy, it was his increased suavity.

On her side, Cosette languished. She suffered from the absence of Marius as she had rejoiced in his presence, peculiarly, without exactly being conscious of it. When Jean Valjean ceased to take her on their customary strolls, a feminine instinct murmured confusedly, at the bottom of her heart, that she must not seem to set store on the Luxembourg garden, and that if this proved to be a matter of indifference to her, her father would take her thither once more. But days, weeks, months, elapsed. Jean Valjean had tacitly accepted Cosette's tacit consent. She regretted it. It was too late. So Marius had disappeared ; all was over. The day on which she returned to the Luxembourg, Marius was no longer there. What was to be done ? Should she ever find him again ? She felt an anguish at her heart, which nothing relieved, and which augmented every day ; she no longer knew whether it was winter or summer, whether it was raining or shining, whether the birds were singing, whether it was the season for dahlias or daisies, whether the Luxembourg was more charming than the Tuileries, whether the linen which the laundress brought home was starched too much or not enough, whether Toussaint had done " her marketing " well or ill ; and she remained dejected, absorbed, attentive to but a single thought, her eyes vague and staring, as when one gazes by night at a black and fathomless spot where an apparition has vanished.

However, she did not allow Jean Valjean to perceive anything of this, except her pallor.

She still wore her sweet face for him.

This pallor sufficed but too thoroughly to trouble Jean Valjean. Sometimes he asked her : —

" What is the matter with you ? "

She replied : " There is nothing the matter with me. "

And after a silence, when she divined that he was sad also, she would add : —

" And you, father—is there anything wrong with you ? "

" With me ? Nothing, " said he.

These two beings who had loved each other so exclusively, and with so touching an affection, and who had lived so long

for each other, now suffered side by side, each on the other's account; without acknowledging it to each other, without anger towards each other, and with a smile.

VIII. — THE CHAIN-GANG.

JEAN VALJEAN was the more unhappy of the two. Youth, even in its sorrows, always possesses its own peculiar radiance.

At times, Jean Valjean suffered so greatly that he became puerile. It is the property of grief to cause the childish side of man to reappear. He had an unconquerable conviction that Cosette was escaping from him. He would have liked to resist, to retain her, to arouse her enthusiasm by some external and brilliant matter. These ideas, puerile as we have just said, and at the same time senile, conveyed to him, by their very childishness, a tolerably just notion of the influence of gold lace on the imaginations of young girls. He once chanced to see a general on horseback, in full uniform, pass along the street, Comte Coutard, the commandant of Paris. He envied that gilded man; what happiness it would be, he said to himself, if he could put on that suit which was an incontestable thing; and if Cosette could behold him thus, she would be dazzled, and when he had Cosette on his arm and passed the gates of the Tuileries, the guard would present arms to him, and that would suffice for Cosette, and would dispel her idea of looking at young men.

An unforeseen shock was added to these sad reflections.

In the isolated life which they led, and since they had come to dwell in the Rue Plumet, they had contracted one habit. They sometimes took a pleasure trip to see the sun rise, a mild species of enjoyment which befits those who are entering life and those who are quitting it.

For those who love solitude, a walk in the early morning is equivalent to a stroll by night, with the cheerfulness of nature added. The streets are deserted and the birds are singing. Cosette, a bird herself, liked to rise early. These matutinal excursions were planned on the preceding evening. He proposed, and she agreed. It was arranged like a plot, they set out before daybreak, and these trips were so many small delights for Cosette. These innocent eccentricities please young people.

Jean Valjean's inclination led him, as we have seen, to the least frequented spots, to solitary nooks, to forgotten places. There then existed, in the vicinity of the barriers of Paris, a sort of poor meadows, which were almost confounded with the city, where grew in summer sickly grain, and which, in autumn, after

the harvest had been gathered, presented the appearance, not of having been reaped, but peeled. Jean Valjean loved to haunt these fields. Cosette was not bored there. It meant solitude to him and liberty to her. There, she became a little girl once more, she could run and almost play ; she took off her hat, laid it on Jean Valjean's knees, and gathered bunches of flowers. She gazed at the butterflies on the flowers, but did not catch them ; gentleness and tenderness are born with love, and the young girl who cherishes within her breast a trembling and fragile ideal has mercy on the wing of a butterfly. She wove garlands of poppies, which she placed on her head, and which, crossed and penetrated with sunlight, glowing until they flamed, formed for her rosy face a crown of burning embers.

Even after their life had grown sad, they kept up their custom of early strolls.

One morning in October, therefore, tempted by the serene perfection of the autumn of 1831, they set out, and found themselves at break of day near the *Barrière du Maine*. It was not dawn, it was daybreak ; a delightful and stern moment. A few constellations here and there in the deep, pale azure, the earth all black, the heavens all white, a quiver amid the blades of grass, everywhere the mysterious chill of twilight. A lark, which seemed mingled with the stars, was carolling at a prodigious height, and one would have declared that that hymn of pettiness calmed immensity. In the East, the *Val-de-Grâce* projected its dark mass on the clear horizon with the sharpness of steel ; Venus dazzlingly brilliant was rising behind that dome and had the air of a soul making its escape from a gloomy edifice.

All was peace and silence ; there was no one on the road ; a few stray laborers, of whom they caught barely a glimpse, were on their way to their work along the side-paths.

Jean Valjean was sitting in a cross-walk on some planks deposited at the gate of a timber-yard. His face was turned towards the highway, his back towards the light ; he had forgotten the sun which was on the point of rising ; he had sunk into one of those profound absorptions in which the mind becomes concentrated, which imprison even the eye, and which are equivalent to four walls. There are meditations which may be called vertical ; when one is at the bottom of them, time is required to return to earth. Jean Valjean had plunged into one of these reveries. He was thinking of Cosette, of the happiness that was possible if nothing came between him and her, of the light with which she filled his life, a light which was but the emanation

tion of her soul. He was almost happy in his revery. Cosette, who was standing beside him, was gazing at the clouds as they turned rosy.

All at once Cosette exclaimed: "Father, I should think some one was coming yonder." Jean Valjean raised his eyes.

Cosette was right. The causeway which leads to the ancient *Barrière du Maine* is a prolongation, as the reader knows, of the *Rue de Sèvres*, and is cut at right angles by the inner boulevard. At the elbow of the causeway and the boulevard, at the spot where it branches, they heard a noise which it was difficult to account for at that hour, and a sort of confused pile made its appearance. Some shapeless thing which was coming from the boulevard was turning into the road.

It grew larger, it seemed to move in an orderly manner, though it was bristling and quivering; it seemed to be a vehicle, but its load could not be distinctly made out. There were horses, wheels, shouts; whips were cracking. By degrees the outlines became fixed, although bathed in shadows. It was a vehicle, in fact, which had just turned from the boulevard into the highway, and which was directing its course towards the barrier near which sat Jean Valjean; a second, of the same aspect followed, then a third, then a fourth; seven chariots made their appearance in succession, the heads of the horses touching the rear of the wagon in front. Figures were moving on these vehicles, flashes were visible through the dusk as though there were naked swords there, a clanking became audible which resembled the rattling of chains, and as this something advanced, the sound of voices waxed louder, and it turned into a terrible thing such as emerges from the cave of dreams.

As it drew nearer, it assumed a form, and was outlined behind the trees with the pallid hue of an apparition; the mass grew white; the day, which was slowly dawning, cast a wan light on this swarming heap which was at once both sepulchral and living, the heads of the figures turned into the faces of corpses, and this is what it proved to be:—

Seven wagons were driving in a file along the road. The first six were singularly constructed. They resembled coopers' drays; they consisted of long ladders placed on two wheels and forming barrows at their rear extremities. Each dray, or rather let us say, each ladder, was attached to four horses harnessed tandem. On these ladders strange clusters of men were being drawn. In the faint light, these men were to be divined rather than seen. Twenty-four on each vehicle, twelve on a side, back to back, facing the passers-by, their legs dangling in the

air, — this was the manner in which these men were travelling, and behind their backs they had something which clanked, and which was a chain, and on their necks something which shone, and which was an iron collar. Each man had his collar, but the chain was for all; so that if these four and twenty men had occasion to alight from the dray and walk, they were seized with a sort of inexorable unity, and were obliged to wind over the ground with the chain for a backbone, somewhat after the fashion of millepedes. In the back and front of each vehicle, two men armed with muskets stood erect, each holding one end of the chain under his foot. The iron necklets were square. The seventh vehicle, a huge rack-sided baggage wagon, without a hood, had four wheels and six horses, and carried a sonorous pile of iron boilers, cast-iron pots, braziers, and chains, among which were mingled several men who were pinioned and stretched at full length, and who seemed to be ill. This wagon, all lattice-work, was garnished with dilapidated hurdles which appeared to have served for former punishments. These vehicles kept to the middle of the road. On each side marched a double hedge of guards of infamous aspect, wearing three-cornered hats, like the soldiers under the Directory, shabby, covered with spots and holes, muffled in uniforms of veterans and the trousers of undertakers' men, half gray, half blue, which were almost hanging in rags, with red epaulets, yellow shoulder-belts, short sabres, muskets, and cudgels; they were a species of soldier-blackguards. These myrmidons seemed composed of the abjectness of the beggar and the authority of the executioner. The one who appeared to be their chief held a postilion's whip in his hand. All these details, blurred by the dimness of dawn, became more and more clearly outlined as the light increased. At the head and in the rear of the convoy rode mounted gendarmes, serious and with sword in fist.

This procession was so long that when the first vehicle reached the barrier, the last was barely debouching from the boulevard. A throng, sprung it is impossible to say whence, and formed in a twinkling, as is frequently the case in Paris, pressed forward from both sides of the road and looked on. In the neighboring lanes the shouts of people calling to each other and the wooden shoes of market-gardeners hastening up to gaze were audible.

The men massed upon the drays allowed themselves to be jolted along in silence. They were livid with the chill of morning. They all wore linen trousers, and their bare feet were thrust into wooden shoes. The rest of their costume was a fantasy of wretchedness. Their accoutrements were horribly incongruous; nothing is more funereal than the harlequin in rags.

Battered felt hats, tarpaulin caps, hideous woollen nightcaps, and, side by side with a short blouse, a black coat broken at the elbow; many wore women's headgear, others had baskets on their heads; hairy breasts were visible, and through the rents in their garments tattooed designs could be descried; temples of Love, flaming hearts, Cupids; eruptions and unhealthy red blotches could also be seen. Two or three had a straw rope attached to the cross-bar of the dray, and suspended under them like a stirrup, which supported their feet. One of them held in his hand and raised to his mouth something which had the appearance of a black stone and which he seemed to be gnawing; it was bread which he was eating. There were no eyes there which were not either dry, dulled, or flaming with an evil light. The escort troop cursed, the men in chains did not utter a syllable; from time to time, the sound of a blow became audible as the cudgels descended on shoulder-blades or skulls; some of these men were yawning; their rags were terrible; their feet hung down, their shoulders oscillated, their heads clashed together, their fetters clanked, their eyes glared ferociously, their fists clenched or fell open inertly like the hands of corpses; in the rear of the convoy ran a band of children screaming with laughter.

This file of vehicles, whatever its nature was, was mournful. It was evident that to-morrow, that an hour hence, a pouring rain might descend, that it might be followed by another and another, and that their dilapidated garments would be drenched, that once soaked, these men would not get dry again, that once chilled, they would not again get warm, that their linen trousers would be glued to their bones by the down-pour, that the water would fill their shoes, that no lashes from the whips would be able to prevent their jaws from chattering, that the chain would continue to bind them by the neck, that their legs would continue to dangle, and it was impossible not to shudder at the sight of these human beings thus bound and passive beneath the cold clouds of autumn, and delivered over to the rain, to the blast, to all the furies of the air, like trees and stones.

Blows from the cudgel were not omitted even in the case of the sick men, who lay there knotted with ropes and motionless on the seventh wagon, and who appeared to have been tossed there like sacks filled with misery.

Suddenly, the sun made its appearance; the immense light of the Orient burst forth, and one would have said that it had set fire to all those ferocious heads. Their tongues were un-

loosed; a conflagration of grins, oaths, and songs exploded, The broad horizontal sheet of light severed the file in two parts, illuminating heads and bodies, leaving feet and wheels in the obscurity. Thoughts made their appearance on these faces; it was a terrible moment; visible demons with their masks removed, fierce souls laid bear. Though lighted up, this wild throng remained in gloom. Some, who were gay, had in their mouths quills through which they blew vermin over the crowd, picking out the women; the dawn accentuated these lamentable profiles with the blackness of its shadows; there was not one of these creatures who was not deformed by reason of wretchedness; and the whole was so monstrous that one would have said that the sun's brilliancy had been changed into the glare of the lightning. The wagon-load which headed the line had struck up a song, and were shouting at the top of their voices with a haggard joviality, a pot-pourri by Desaugiers, then famous, called *The Vestal*; the trees shivered mournfully; in the cross-lanes, countenances of bourgeois listened in idiotic delight to these coarse strains droned by spectres.

All sorts of distress met in this procession as in chaos; here were to be found the facial angles of every sort of beast, old men, youths, bald heads, gray beards, cynical monstrosities, sour resignation, savage grins, senseless attitudes, snouts surmounted by caps, heads like those of young girls with cockscrew curls on the temples, infantile visages, and by reason of that, horrible thin skeleton faces, to which death alone was lacking. On the first cart was a negro, who had been a slave, in all probability, and who could make a comparison of his chains. The frightful leveller from below, shame, had passed over these brows; at that degree of abasement, the last transformations were suffered by all in their extremest depths, and ignorance, converted into dulness, was the equal of intelligence converted into despair. There was no choice possible between these men who appeared to the eye as the flower of the mud. It was evident that the person who had had the ordering of that unclean procession had not classified them. These beings had been fettered and coupled pell-mell, in alphabetical disorder, probably, and loaded hap-hazard on those carts. Nevertheless, horrors, when grouped together, always end by evolving a result; all additions of wretched men give a sum total, each chain exhaled a common soul, and each dray-load had its own physiognomy. By the side of the one where they were singing, there was one where they were howling; a third where they were begging; one could be seen in which they were gnashing their teeth; another load

menaced the spectators, another blasphemed God ; the last was as silent as the tomb. Dante would have thought that he beheld his seven circles of hell on the march. The march of the damned to their tortures, performed in sinister wise, not on the formidable and flaming chariot of the Apocalypse, but, what was more mournful than that, on the gibbet cart.

One of the guards, who had a hook on the end of his cudgel, made a pretence from time to time, of stirring up this mass of human filth. An old woman in the crowd pointed them out to her little boy five years old, and said to him : " Rascal, let that be a warning to you ! "

As the songs and blasphemies increased, the man who appeared to be the captain of the escort cracked his whip, and at that signal, a fearful dull and blind flogging, which produced the sound of hail, fell upon the seven dray-loads ; many roared and foamed at the mouth ; which redoubled the delight of the street urchins who had hastened up, a swarm of flies on these wounds.

Jean Valjean's eyes had assumed a frightful expression. They were no longer eyes ; they were those deep and glassy objects which replace the glance in the case of certain wretched men, which seem unconscious of reality, and in which flames the reflection of terrors and of catastrophes. He was not looking at a spectacle, he was seeing a vision. He tried to rise, to flee, to make his escape ; he could not move his feet. Sometimes, the things that you see seize upon you and hold you fast. He remained nailed to the spot, petrified, stupid, asking himself, athwart confused and inexpressible anguish, what this sepulchral persecution signified, and whence had come that pandemonium which was pursuing him. All at once, he raised his hand to his brow, a gesture habitual to those whose memory suddenly returns ; he remembered that this was, in fact, the usual itinerary, that it was customary to make this detour in order to avoid all possibility of encountering royalty on the road to Fontainebleau, and that, five and thirty years before, he had himself passed through that barrier.

Cosette was no less terrified, but in a different way. She did not understand ; what she beheld did not seem to her to be possible ; at length she cried : —

" Father ! What are those men in those carts ? "

Jean Valjean replied : " Convicts. "

" Whither are they going ? "

" To the galleys. "

At that moment, the cudgelling, multiplied by a hundred

hands, became zealous, blows with the flat of the sword were mingled with it, it was a perfect storm of whips and clubs; the convicts bent before it, a hideous obedience was evoked by the torture, and all held their peace, darting glances like chained wolves.

Cosette trembled in every limb; she resumed:—

“Father, are they still men?”

“Sometimes,” answered the unhappy man.

It was the chain-gang, in fact, which had set out before day-break from Bicêtre, and had taken the road to Mans in order to avoid Fontainebleau, where the King then was. This caused the horrible journey to last three or four days longer; but torture may surely be prolonged with the object of sparing the royal personage a sight of it.

Jean Valjean returned home utterly overwhelmed. Such encounters are shocks, and the memory that they leave behind them resembles a thorough shaking up.

Nevertheless, Jean Valjean did not observe that, on his way back to the Rue de Babylone with Cosette, the latter was plying him with other questions on the subject of what they had just seen; perhaps he was too much absorbed in his own dejection to notice her words and reply to them. But when Cosette was leaving him in the evening, to betake herself to bed, he heard her say in a low voice, and as though talking to herself: “It seems to me, that if I were to find one of those men in my pathway, oh, my God, I should die merely from the sight of him close at hand.”

Fortunately, chance ordained that on the morrow of that tragic day, there was some official solemnity apropos of I know not what,—fêtes in Paris, a review in the Champ de Mars, jousts on the Seine, theatrical performances in the Champs-Élysées, fireworks at the Arc de l'Étoile, illuminations everywhere. Jean Valjean did violence to his habits, and took Cosette to see these rejoicings, for the purpose of diverting her from the memory of the day before, and of effacing, beneath the smiling tumult of all Paris, the abominable thing which had passed before her. The review with which the festival was spiced made the presence of uniforms perfectly natural; Jean Valjean donned his uniform of a national guard with the vague inward feeling of a man who is betaking himself to shelter. However, this trip seemed to attain its object. Cosette, who made it her law to please her father, and to whom, moreover, all spectacles were a novelty, accepted this diversion with the light and easy good grace of youth, and did not pout too disdain-

fully at that flutter of enjoyment called a public fête; so that Jean Valjean was able to believe that he had succeeded, and that no trace of that hideous vision remained.

Some days later, one morning, when the sun was shining brightly, and they were both on the steps leading to the garden, another infraction of the rules which Jean Valjean seemed to have imposed upon himself, and to the custom of remaining in her chamber which melancholy had caused Cosette to adopt, Cosette, in a wrapper, was standing erect in that negligent attire of early morning which envelops young girls in an adorable way and which produces the effect of a cloud drawn over a star; and, with her head bathed in light, rosy after a good sleep, submitting to the gentle glances of the tender old man, she was picking a daisy to pieces. Cosette did not know the delightful legend, *I love a little, passionately, etc.* — who was there who could have taught her? She was handling the flower instinctively, innocently, without a suspicion that to pluck a daisy apart is to do the same by a heart. If there were a fourth, and smiling Grace called Melancholy, she would have worn the air of that Grace. Jean Valjean was fascinated by the contemplation of those tiny fingers on that flower, and forgetful of everything in the radiance emitted by that child. A red-breast was warbling in the thicket, on one side. White cloudlets floated across the sky, so gayly, that one would have said that they had just been set at liberty. Cosette went on attentively tearing the leaves from her flower; she seemed to be thinking about something; but whatever it was, it must be something charming; all at once, she turned her head over her shoulder with the delicate languor of a swan, and said to Jean Valjean: “Father, what are the galleys like?”



BOOK FOURTH.—SUCCOR FROM BELOW MAY TURN OUT TO BE SUCCOR FROM ON HIGH.

I.—A WOUND WITHOUT, HEALING WITHIN.

Thus their life clouded over by degrees.

But one diversion, which had formerly been a happiness, remained to them, which was to carry bread to those who were hungry, and clothing to those who were cold. Cosette often

accompanied Jean Valjean on these visits to the poor, on which they recovered some remnants of their former free intercourse; and sometimes, when the day had been a good one, and they had assisted many in distress, and cheered and warmed many little children, Cosette was rather merry in the evening. It was at this epoch that they paid their visit to the Jondrette den.

On the day following that visit, Jean Valjean made his appearance in the pavilion in the morning, calm as was his wont, but with a large wound on his left arm which was much inflamed, and very angry, which resembled a burn, and which he explained in some way or other. This wound resulted in his being detained in the house for a month with fever. He would not call in a doctor. When Cosette urged him "Call the dog-doctor," said he.

Cosette dressed the wound morning and evening with so divine an air and such angelic happiness at being of use to him, that Jean Valjean felt all his former joy returning, his fears and anxieties dissipating, and he gazed at Cosette, saying: "Oh! what a kindly wound! Oh! what a good misfortune!"

Cosette on perceiving that her father was ill, had deserted the pavilion and again taken a fancy to the little lodging and the back courtyard. She passed nearly all her days beside Jean Valjean and read to him the books which he desired. Generally, they were books of travel. Jean Valjean was undergoing a new birth; his happiness was reviving in these ineffable rays; the Luxembourg, the prowling young stranger, Cosette's coldness, — all these clouds upon his soul were growing dim. He had reached the point where he said to himself: "I imagined all that. I am an old fool."

His happiness was so great that the horrible discovery of the Thénardiens made in the Jondrette hovel, unexpected as it was, had, after a fashion, glided over him unnoticed. He had succeeded in making his escape; all trace of him was lost — what more did he care for! he only thought of those wretched beings to pity them. "Here they are in prison, and henceforth they will be incapacitated for doing any harm," he thought, "but what a lamentable family in distress!"

As for the hideous vision of the Barrière du Maine, Cosette had not referred to it again.

Sister Sainte-Mechtilde had taught Cosette music in the convent; Cosette had the voice of a linnet with a soul, and sometimes, in the evening, in the wounded man's humble abode, she warbled melancholy songs which delighted Jean Valjean.

Spring came ; the garden was so delightful at that season of the year, that Jean Valjean said to Cosette :—

“ You never go there ; I want you to stroll in it.”

“ As you like, father,” said Cosette.

And for the sake of obeying her father, she resumed her walks in the garden, generally alone, for, as we have mentioned, Jean Valjean, who was probably afraid of being seen through the fence, hardly ever went there.

Jean Valjean's wound had created a diversion.

When Cosette saw that her father was suffering less, that he was convalescing, and that he appeared to be happy, she experienced a contentment which she did not even perceive, so gently and naturally had it come. Then, it was in the month of March, the days were growing longer, the winter was departing, the winter always bears away with it a portion of our sadness ; then came April, that daybreak of summer, fresh as dawn always is, gay like every childhood ; a little inclined to weep at times like the new-born being that it is. In that month, nature has charming gleams which pass from the sky, from the trees, from the meadows and the flowers into the heart of man.

Cosette was still too young to escape the penetrating influence of that April joy which bore so strong a resemblance to herself. Insensibly, and without her suspecting the fact, the blackness departed from her spirit. In spring, sad souls grow light, as light falls into cellars at midday. Cosette was no longer sad. However, though this was so, she did not account for it to herself. In the morning, about ten o'clock, after breakfast, when she had succeeded in enticing her father into the garden for a quarter of an hour, and when she was pacing up and down in the sunlight in front of the steps, supporting his left arm for him, she did not perceive that she laughed every moment and that she was happy.

Jean Valjean, intoxicated, beheld her growing fresh and rosy once more.

“ Oh ! What a good wound ! ” he repeated in a whisper.

And he felt grateful to the Thénardiens.

His wound once healed, he resumed his solitary twilight strolls.

It is a mistake to suppose that a person can stroll alone in that fashion in the uninhabited regions of Paris without meeting with some adventure.

II. — MOTHER PLUTARQUE FINDS NO DIFFICULTY IN EXPLAINING A PHENOMENON.

ONE evening, little Gavroche had had nothing to eat; he remembered that he had not dined on the preceding day either; this was becoming tiresome. He resolved to make an effort to secure some supper. He strolled out beyond the Salpêtrière into deserted regions; that is where windfalls are to be found; where there is no one, one always finds something. He reached a settlement which appeared to him to be the village of Austerlitz.

In one of his preceding lounges he had noticed there an old garden haunted by an old man and an old woman, and in that garden, a passable apple-tree. Beside the apple-tree stood a sort of fruit-house, which was not securely fastened, and where one might contrive to get an apple. One apple is a supper; one apple is life. That which was Adam's ruin might prove Gavroche's salvation. The garden abutted on a solitary, unpaved lane, bordered with brushwood while awaiting the arrival of houses; the garden was separated from it by a hedge.

Gavroche directed his steps towards this garden; he found the lane, he recognized the apple-tree, he verified the fruit-house, he examined the hedge; a hedge means merely one stride. The day was declining, there was not even a cat in the lane, the hour was propitious. Gavroche began the operation of scaling the hedge, then suddenly paused. Some one was talking in the garden. Gavroche peeped through one of the breaks in the hedge.

A couple of paces distant, at the foot of the hedge on the other side, exactly at the point where the gap which he was meditating would have been made, there was a sort of recumbent stone which formed a bench, and on this bench was seated the old man of the garden, while the old woman was standing in front of him. The old woman was grumbling. Gavroche, who was not very discreet, listened.

"Monsieur Mabeuf!" said the old woman.

"Mabeuf!" thought Gavroche, "that name is a perfect farce."

The old man who was thus addressed, did not stir. The old woman repeated: —

"Monsieur Mabeuf!"

The old man, without raising his eyes from the ground, made up his mind to answer: —

"What is it, Mother Plutarque?"

"Mother Plutarque!" thought Gavroche, "another farcical name."

Mother Plutarque began again, and the old man was forced to accept the conversation:—

"The landlord is not pleased."

"Why?"

"We owe three quarters rent."

"In three months, we shall owe him for four quarters."

"He says that he will turn you out to sleep."

"I will go."

"The green-grocer insists on being paid. She will no longer leave her fagots. What will you warm yourself with this winter? We shall have no wood."

"There is the sun."

"The butcher refuses to give credit; he will not let us have any more meat."

"That is quite right. I do not digest meat well. It is too heavy."

"What shall we have for dinner?"

"Bread."

"The baker demands a settlement, and says, 'no money, no bread.'"

"That is well."

"What will you eat?"

"We have apples in the apple-room."

"But, Monsieur, we can't live like that without money."

"I have none."

The old woman went away, the old man remained alone. He fell into thought. Gavroche became thoughtful also. It was almost dark.

The first result of Gavroche's meditation was, that instead of scaling the hedge, he crouched down under it. The branches stood apart a little at the foot of the thicket.

"Come," exclaimed Gavroche mentally, "here's a nook!" and he curled up in it. His back was almost in contact with Father Mabeuf's bench. He could hear the octogenarian breathe.

Then, by way of dinner, he tried to sleep.

It was a cat-nap, with one eye open. While he dozed, Gavroche kept on the watch.

The twilight pallor of the sky blanched the earth, and the lane formed a livid line between two rows of dark bushes.

All at once, in this whitish band, two figures made their

appearance. One was in front, the other some distance in the rear.

"There come two creatures," muttered Gavroche.

The first form seemed to be some elderly bourgeois, who was bent and thoughtful, dressed more than plainly, and who was walking slowly because of his age, and strolling about in the open evening air.

The second was straight, firm, slender. It regulated its pace by that of the first; but in the voluntary slowness of its gait, suppleness and agility were discernible. This figure had also something fierce and disquieting about it, the whole shape was that of what was then called *an elegant*; the hat was of good shape, the coat black, well cut, probably of fine cloth, and well fitted in at the waist. The head was held erect with a sort of robust grace, and beneath the hat the pale profile of a young man could be made out in the dim light. This profile had a rose in its mouth. This second form was well known to Gavroche; it was Montparnasse.

He could have told nothing about the other, except that he was a respectable old man.

Gavroche immediately began to take observations.

One of these two pedestrians evidently had a project connected with the other. Gavroche was well placed to watch the course of events. The bedroom had turned into a hiding-place at a very opportune moment.

Montparnasse on the hunt at such an hour, in such a place, betokened something threatening. Gavroche felt his gamin's heart moved with compassion for the old man.

What was he to do? Interfere? One weakness coming to the aid of another! It would be merely a laughing matter for Montparnasse. Gavroche did not shut his eyes to the fact that, the old man in the first place, and the child in the second, would make but two mouthfuls for that redoubtable ruffian eighteen years of age.

While Gavroche was deliberating, the attack took place, abruptly and hideously. The attack of the tiger on the wild ass, the attack of the spider on the fly. Montparnasse suddenly tossed away his rose, bounded upon the old man, seized him by the collar, grasped and clung to him, and Gavroche with difficulty restrained a scream. A moment later one of these men was underneath the other, groaning, struggling, with a knee of marble upon his breast. Only, it was not just what Gavroche had expected. The one who lay on the earth was Montparnasse;

the one who was on top was the old man. All this took place a few paces distant from Gavroche.

The old man had received the shock, had returned it, and that in such a terrible fashion, that in a twinkling, the assailant and the assailed had exchanged rôles.

"Here's a hearty veteran!" thought Gavroche.

He could not refrain from clapping his hands. But it was applause wasted. It did not reach the combatants, absorbed and deafened as they were, each by the other, as their breath mingled in the struggle.

Silence ensued. Montparnasse ceased his struggles. Gavroche indulged in this aside: "Can he be dead!"

The goodman had not uttered a word, nor given vent to a cry. He rose to his feet, and Gavroche heard him say to Montparnasse:—

"Get up."

Montparnasse rose, but the goodman held him fast. Montparnasse's attitude was the humiliated and furious attitude of the wolf who has been caught by a sheep.

Gavroche looked on and listened, making an effort to reinforce his eyes with his ears. He was enjoying himself immensely.

He was repaid for his conscientious anxiety in the character of a spectator. He was able to catch on the wing a dialogue which borrowed from the darkness an indescribably tragic accent. The goodman questioned, Montparnasse replied.

"How old are you?"

"Nineteen."

"You are strong and healthy. Why do you not work?"

"It bores me."

"What is your trade?"

"An idler."

"Speak seriously. Can anything be done for you? What would you like to be?"

"A thief."

A pause ensued. The old man seemed absorbed in profound thought. He stood motionless, and did not relax his hold on Montparnasse.

Every moment the vigorous and agile young ruffian indulged in the twitchings of a wild beast caught in a snare. He gave a jerk, tried a crook of the knee, twisted his limbs desperately, and made efforts to escape.

The old man did not appear to notice it, and held both his arms with one hand, with the sovereign indifference of absolute force.

The old man's reverie lasted for some time, then, looking steadily at Montparnasse, he addressed to him in a gentle voice, in the midst of the darkness where they stood, a solemn harangue, of which Gavroche did not lose a single syllable:—

“My child, you are entering, through indolence, on one of the most laborious of lives. Ah! You declare yourself to be an idler! prepare to toil. There is a certain formidable machine, have you seen it? It is the rolling-mill. You must be on your guard against it, it is crafty and ferocious; if it catches hold of the skirt of your coat, you will be drawn in bodily. That machine is laziness. Stop while there is yet time, and save yourself! Otherwise, it is all over with you; in a short time you will be among the gearing. Once entangled, hope for nothing more. Toil, lazybones! there is no more repose for you! The iron hand of implacable toil has seized you. You do not wish to earn your living, to have a task, to fulfil a duty! It bores you to be like other men? Well! You will be different. Labor is the law; he who rejects it will find ennui his torment. You do not wish to be a workingman, you will be a slave. Toil lets go of you on one side only to grasp you again on the other. You do not desire to be its friend, you shall be its negro slave. Ah! You would have none of the honest weariness of men, you shall have the sweat of the damned. Where others sing, you will rattle in your throat. You will see afar off, from below, other men at work; it will seem to you that they are resting. The laborer, the harvester, the sailor, the blacksmith, will appear to you in glory like the blessed spirits in paradise. What radiance surrounds the forge! To guide the plough, to bind the sheaves, is joy. The bark at liberty in the wind, what delight! Do you, lazy idler, delve, drag on, roll, march! Drag your halter. You are a beast of burden in the team of hell! Ah! To do nothing is your object. Well, not a week, not a day, not an hour shall you have free from oppression. You will be able to lift nothing without anguish. Every minute that passes will make your muscles crack. What is a feather to others will be a rock to you. The simplest things will become steep acclivities. Life will become monstrous all about you. To go, to come, to breathe, will be just so many terrible labors. Your lungs will produce on you the effect of weighing a hundred pounds. Whether you shall walk here rather than there, will become a problem that must be solved. Any one who wants to go out simply gives his door a push, and there he is in the open air. If you wish to go out, you will be obliged to pierce your wall.

What does every one who wants to step into the street do? He goes down stairs; you will tear up your sheets, little by little you will make of them a rope, then you will climb out of your window, and you will suspend yourself by that thread over an abyss, and it will be night, amid storm, rain, and the hurricane, and if the rope is too short, but one way of descending will remain to you, to fall. To drop hap-hazard into the gulf, from an unknown height, on what? On what is beneath, on the unknown. Or you will crawl up a chimney-flue, at the risk of burning; or you will creep through a sewer-pipe, at the risk of drowning; I do not speak of the holes that you will be obliged to mask, of the stones which you will have to take up and replace twenty times a day, of the plaster that you will have to hide in your straw pallet. A lock presents itself; the bourgeois has in his pocket a key made by a locksmith. If you wish to pass out, you will be condemned to execute a terrible work of art; you will take a large sou, you will cut it in two plates; with what tools? You will have to invent them. That is your business. Then you will hollow out the interior of these plates, taking great care of the outside, and you will make on the edges a thread, so that they can be adjusted one upon the other like a box and its cover. The top and bottom thus screwed together, nothing will be suspected. To the overseers it will be only a sou; to you it will be a box. What will you put in this box? A small bit of steel. A watch-spring, in which you will have cut teeth, and which will form a saw. With this saw, as long as a pin, and concealed in a sou, you will cut the bolt of the lock, you will sever bolts, the padlock of your chain, and the bar at your window, and the fetter on your leg. This masterpiece finished, this prodigy accomplished, all these miracles of art, address, skill, and patience executed, what will be your recompense if it becomes known that you are the author? The dungeon. There is your future. What precipices are idleness and pleasure! Do you know that to do nothing is a melancholy resolution? To live in idleness on the property of society! to be useless, that is to say, pernicious! This leads straight to the depth of wretchedness. Woe to the man who desires to be parasite! He will become vermin! Ah! So it does not please you to work? Ah! You have but one thought, to drink well, to eat well, to sleep well. You will drink water, you will eat black bread, you will sleep on a plank with a fetter whose cold touch you will feel on your flesh all night long, riveted to your limbs. You will break those fetters, you will flee. That is well. You will crawl on your belly through the brushwood,

and you will eat grass like the beasts of the forest. And you will be recaptured. And then you will pass years in a dungeon, riveted to a wall, groping for your jug that you may drink, gnawing at a horrible loaf of darkness which dogs would not touch, eating beans that the worms have eaten before you. You will be a wood-louse in a cellar. Ah! Have pity on yourself, you miserable young child, who were sucking at nurse less than twenty years ago, and who have, no doubt, a mother still alive! I conjure you, listen to me, I entreat you. You desire fine black cloth, varnished shoes, to have your hair curled and sweet-smelling oils on your locks, to please low women, to be handsome. You will be shaven clean, and you will wear a red blouse and wooden shoes. You want rings on your fingers, you will have an iron necklet on your neck. If you glance at a woman, you will receive a blow. And you will enter there at the age of twenty. And you will come out at fifty! You will enter young, rosy, fresh, with brilliant eyes, and all your white teeth, and your handsome, youthful hair; you will come out broken, bent, wrinkled, toothless, horrible, with white locks! Ah! my poor child, you are on the wrong road; idleness is counselling you badly; the hardest of all work is thieving. Believe me, do not undertake that painful profession of an idle man. It is not comfortable to become a rascal. It is less disagreeable to be an honest man. Now go, and ponder on what I have said to you. By the way, what did you want of me? My purse? Here it is."

And the old man, releasing Montparnasse, put his purse in the latter's hand; Montparnasse weighed it for a moment, after which he allowed it to slide gently into the back pocket of his coat, with the same mechanical precaution as though he had stolen it.

All this having been said and done, the goodman turned his back and tranquilly resumed his stroll.

"The blockhead!" muttered Montparnasse.

Who was this goodman? The reader has, no doubt, already divined.

Montparnasse watched him with amazement, as he disappeared in the dusk. This contemplation was fatal to him.

While the old man was walking away, Gavroche drew near.

Gavroche had assured himself, with a sidelong glance, that Father Mabeuf was still sitting on his bench, probably sound asleep. Then the gamin emerged from his thicket, and began to crawl after Montparnasse in the dark, as the latter stood there motionless. In this manner he came up to Montparnasse

without being seen or heard, gently insinuated his hand into the back pocket of that frock-coat of fine black cloth, seized the purse, withdrew his hand, and having recourse once more to his crawling, he slipped away like an adder through the shadows. Montparnasse, who had no reason to be on his guard, and who was engaged in thought for the first time in his life, perceived nothing. When Gavroche had once more attained the point where Father Mabeuf was, he flung the purse over the hedge, and fled as fast as his legs would carry him.

The purse fell on Father Mabeuf's foot. This commotion roused him.

He bent over and picked up the purse.

He did not understand in the least, and opened it.

The purse had two compartments; in one of them there was some small change; in the other lay six napoleons.

M. Mabeuf, in great alarm, referred the matter to his house-keeper.

"That has fallen from heaven," said Mother Plutarque.



BOOK FIFTH. — THE END OF WHICH DOES NOT RESEMBLE THE BEGINNING.

I. — SOLITUDE AND THE BARRACKS COMBINED.

Cosette's grief, which had been so poignant and lively four or five months previously, had, without her being conscious of the fact, entered upon its convalescence. Nature, spring, youth, love for her father, the gayety of the birds and flowers, caused something almost resembling forgetfulness to filter gradually, drop by drop, into that soul, which was so virgin and so young. Was the fire wholly extinct there? Or was it merely that layers of ashes had formed? The truth is, that she hardly felt the painful and burning spot any longer.

One day she suddenly thought of Marius: "Why!" said she. "I no longer think of him."

That same week, she noticed a very handsome officer of lancers, with a wasp-like waist, a delicious uniform, the cheeks of a young girl, a sword under his arm, waxed mustaches, and a glazed schapka, passing the gate. Moreover, he had light hair, prominent blue eyes, a round face, was vain, insolent and good-looking; quite the reverse of Marius. He had a cigar in

his mouth. Cosette thought that this officer doubtless belonged to the regiment in barracks in the Rue de Babylone.

On the following day, she saw him pass again. She took note of the hour.

From that time forth, was it chance? she saw him pass nearly every day.

The officer's comrades perceived that there was, in that "badly kept" garden, behind that malicious rococo fence, a very pretty creature, who was almost always there when the handsome lieutenant, — who is not unknown to the reader, and whose name was Théodule Gillenormand, — passed by.

"See here!" they said to him, "there's a little creature there who is making eyes at you, look."

"Have I the time," replied the lancer, "to look at all the girls who look at me?"

This was at the precise moment when Marius was descending heavily towards agony, and was saying: "If I could but see her before I die!" — Had his wish been realized, had he beheld Cosette at that moment gazing at the lancer, he would not have been able to utter a word, and he would have expired with grief.

Whose fault was it? No one's.

Marius possessed one of those temperaments which bury themselves in sorrow and there abide; Cosette was one of those persons who plunge into sorrow and emerge from it again.

Cosette was, moreover, passing through that dangerous period, the fatal phase of feminine revery abandoned to itself, in which the isolated heart of a young girl resembles the tendrils of the vine which cling, as chance directs, to the capital of a marble column or to the post of a wine-shop. A rapid and decisive moment, critical for every orphan, be she poor or rich, for wealth does not prevent a bad choice; misalliances are made in very high circles, real misalliance is that of souls; and as many an unknown young man, without name, without birth, without fortune, is a marble column which bears up a temple of grand sentiments and grand ideas, so such and such a man of the world satisfied and opulent, who has polished boots and varnished words, if looked at not outside, but inside, a thing which is reserved for his wife, is nothing more than a block obscurely haunted by violent, unclean, and vinous passions; the post of a drinking-shop.

What did Cosette's soul contain? Passion calmed or lulled to sleep; something limpid, brilliant, troubled to a certain depth, and gloomy lower down. The image of the handsome officer was reflected in the surface. Did a souvenir linger in

the depths? — Quite at the bottom? — Possibly. Cosette did not know.

A singular incident supervened.

II. — COSETTE'S APPREHENSIONS.

DURING the first fortnight in April, Jean Valjean took a journey. This, as the reader knows happened from time to time, at very long intervals. He remained absent a day or two days at the utmost. Where did he go? No one knew, not even Cosette. Once only, on the occasion of one of these departures, she had accompanied him in a hackney-coach as far as a little blind-alley at the corner of which she read: *Impasse de la Planchette*. There he alighted, and the coach took Cosette back to the Rue de Babylone. It was usually when money was lacking in the house that Jean Valjean took these little trips.

So Jean Valjean was absent. He had said: "I shall return in three days."

That evening, Cosette was alone in the drawing-room. In order to get rid of her ennui, she had opened her piano-organ, and had begun to sing, accompanying herself the while, the chorus from *Euryanthe*: "Hunters astray in the wood!" which is probably the most beautiful thing in all the sphere of music. When she had finished, she remained wrapped in thought.

All at once, it seemed to her that she heard the sound of footsteps in the garden.

It could not be her father, he was absent; it could not be Toussaint, she was in bed, and it was ten o'clock at night.

She stepped to the shutter of the drawing-room, which was closed, and laid her ear against it.

It seemed to her that it was the tread of a man, and that he was walking very softly.

She mounted rapidly to the first floor, to her own chamber, opened a small wicket in her shutter, and peeped into the garden. The moon was at the full. Everything could be seen as plainly as by day.

There was no one there.

She opened the window. The garden was absolutely calm, and all that was visible was that the street was deserted as usual.

Cosette thought that she had been mistaken. She thought that she had heard a noise. It was a hallucination produced by the melancholy and magnificent chorus of Weber, which lays

opens before the mind terrified depths, which trembles before the gaze like a dizzy forest, and in which one hears the crackling of dead branches beneath the uneasy tread of the hunters of whom one catches a glimpse through the twilight.

She thought no more about it.

Moreover, Cosette was not very timid by nature. There flowed in her veins some of the blood of the bohemian and the adventuress who runs barefoot. It will be remembered that she was more of a lark than a dove. There was a foundation of wildness and bravery in her.

On the following day, at an earlier hour, towards nightfall, she was strolling in the garden. In the midst of the confused thoughts which occupied her, she fancied that she caught for an instant a sound similar to that of the preceding evening, as though some one were walking beneath the trees in the dusk, and not very far from her; but she told herself that nothing so closely resembles a step on the grass as the friction of two branches which have moved from side to side, and she paid no heed to it. Besides, she could see nothing.

She emerged from "the thicket"; she had still to cross a small lawn to regain the steps.

The moon, which had just risen behind her, cast Cosette's shadow in front of her upon this lawn, as she came out from the shrubbery.

Cosette halted in alarm.

Beside her shadow, the moon outlined distinctly upon the turf another shadow, which was particularly startling and terrible, a shadow which had a round hat.

It was the shadow of a man, who must have been standing on the border of the clump of shrubbery, a few paces in the rear of Cosette.

She stood for a moment without the power to speak, or cry, or call, or stir, or turn her head.

Then she summoned up all her courage, and turned round resolutely.

There was no one there.

She glanced on the ground. The figure had disappeared.

She re-entered the thicket, searched the corners boldly, went as far as the gate, and found nothing.

She felt herself absolutely chilled with terror. Was this another hallucination? What! Two days in succession! One hallucination might pass, but two hallucinations? The disquieting point about it was, that the shadow had assuredly not been a phantom. Phantoms do not wear round hats.

On the following day Jean Valjean returned. Cosette told him what she thought she had heard and seen. She wanted to be reassured and to see her father shrug his shoulders and say to her: "You are a little goose."

Jean Valjean grew anxious.

"It cannot be anything," said he.

He left her under some pretext, and went into the garden, and she saw him examining the gate with great attention.

During the night she woke up: this time she was sure, and she distinctly heard some one walking close to the flight of steps beneath her window. She ran to her little wicket and opened it. In point of fact, there was a man in the garden, with a large club in his hand. Just as she was about to scream, the moon lighted up the man's profile. It was her father. She returned to her bed, saying to herself: "He is very uneasy!"

Jean Valjean passed that night and the two succeeding nights in the garden. Cosette saw him through the hole in her shutter.

On the third night, the moon was on the wane and had begun to rise later; at one o'clock in the morning, possibly, she heard a loud burst of laughter and her father's voice calling her:—

"Cosette!"

She jumped out of bed, threw on her dressing-gown, and opened her window.

Her father was standing on the grass-plot below.

"I have waked you for the purpose of reassuring you," said he; "look, there is your shadow with the round hat."

And he pointed out to her on the turf a shadow cast by the moon, and which did, indeed, bear considerable resemblance to the spectre of a man wearing a round hat. It was the shadow produced by a chimney-pipe of sheet iron, with a hood, which rose above a neighboring roof.

Cosette joined in his laughter, all her lugubrious suppositions were allayed, and the next morning, as she was at breakfast with her father, she made merry over the sinister garden haunted by the shadows of iron chimney-pots.

Jean Valjean became quite tranquil once more; as for Cosette, she did not pay much attention to the question whether the chimney-pot was really in the direction of the shadow which she had seen, or thought she had seen, and whether the moon had been in the same spot in the sky.

She did not question herself as to the peculiarity of a chimney-pot which is afraid of being caught in the act, and which retires when some one looks at its shadow, for the shadow had taken the alarm when Cosette had turned round, and Cosette

had thought herself very sure of this. Cosette's serenity was fully restored. The proof appeared to her to be complete, and it quite vanished from her mind, whether there could possibly be any one walking in the garden during the evening or at night.

A few days later, however, a fresh incident occurred.

III. — ENRICHED WITH COMMENTARIES BY TOUSSAINT.

IN the garden, near the railing on the street, there was a stone bench, screened from the eyes of the curious by a plantation of yoke-elms, but which could, in case of necessity, be reached by an arm from the outside, past the trees and the gate.

One evening during that same month of April, Jean Valjean had gone out; Cosette had seated herself on this bench after sundown. The breeze was blowing briskly in the trees, Cosette was meditating; an objectless sadness was taking possession of her little by little, that invincible sadness evoked by the evening, and which arises, perhaps, who knows, from the mystery of the tomb which is ajar at that hour.

Perhaps Fantine was within that shadow.

Cosette rose, slowly made the tour of the garden, walking on the grass drenched in dew, and saying to herself, through the species of melancholy somnambulism in which she was plunged: "Really, one needs wooden shoes for the garden at this hour. One takes cold."

She returned to the bench.

As she was about to resume her seat there, she observed on the spot which she had quitted, a tolerably large stone which had, evidently, not been there a moment before.

Cosette gazed at the stone, asking herself what it meant. All at once the idea occurred to her that the stone had not reached the bench all by itself, that some one had placed it there, that an arm had been thrust through the railing, and this idea appeared to alarm her. This time, the fear was genuine; the stone was there. No doubt was possible; she did not touch it, fled without glancing behind her, took refuge in the house, and immediately closed with shutter, bolt, and bar the door-like window opening on the flight of steps. She inquired of Toussaint:—

"Has my father returned yet?"

"Not yet, Mademoiselle."

[We have already noted once for all the fact that Toussaint stuttered. May we be permitted to dispense with it for the future. The musical notation of an infirmity is repugnant to us.]

Jean Valjean, a thoughtful man, and given to nocturnal strolls, often returned quite late at night.

"Toussaint," went on Cosette, "are you careful to thoroughly barricade the shutters opening on the garden, at least with bars, in the evening, and to put the little iron things in the little rings that close them?"

"Oh! be easy on that score, Miss."

Toussaint did not fail in her duty, and Cosette was well aware of the fact, but she could not refrain from adding:—

"It is so solitary here."

"So far as that is concerned," said Toussaint, "it is true. We might be assassinated before we had time to say *ouf!* And Monsieur does not sleep in the house, to boot. But fear nothing, Miss, I fasten the shutters up like prisons. Lone women! That is enough to make one shudder, I believe you! Just imagine, what if you were to see men enter your chamber at night and say: 'Hold your tongue!' and begin to cut your throat. It's not the dying so much; you die, for one ~~must~~ die, and that's all right; it's the abomination of feeling those people touch you. And then, their knives; they can't be able to cut well with them! Ah, good gracious!"

"Be quiet," said Cosette. "Fasten everything thoroughly."

Cosette, terrified by the melodrama improvised by Toussaint, and possibly, also, by the recollection of the apparitions of the past week, which recurred to her memory, dared not even say to her: "Go and look at the stone which has been placed on the bench!" for fear of opening the garden gate and allowing "the men" to enter. She saw that all the doors and windows were carefully fastened, made Toussaint go all over the house from garret to cellar, locked herself up in her own chamber, bolted her door, looked under her couch, went to bed and slept badly. All night long she saw that big stone, as large as a mountain and full of caverns.

At sunrise, — the property of the rising sun is to make us laugh at all our terrors of the past night, and our laughter is in direct proportion to our terror which they have caused, — at sunrise Cosette, when she woke, viewed her fright as a nightmare, and said to herself: "What have I been thinking of? It is like the footsteps that I thought I heard a week or two ago in the garden at night! It is like the shadow of the chimney-pot! Am I becoming a coward?" The sun, which was glowing through the crevices in her shutters, and turning the damask curtains crimson, reassured her to such an extent that everything vanished from her thoughts, even the stone.

"There was no more a stone on the bench than there was a man in a round hat in the garden; I dreamed about the stone, as I did all the rest."

She dressed herself, descended to the garden, ran to the bench, and broke out in a cold perspiration. The stone was there.

But this lasted only for a moment. That which is terror by night is curiosity by day.

"Bah!" said she. "come, let us see what it is."

She lifted the stone, which was tolerably large. Beneath it was something which resembled a letter. It was a white envelope. Cosette seized it. There was no address on one side, no seal on the other. Yet the envelope, though unsealed, was not empty. Papers could be seen inside.

Cosette examined it. It was no longer alarm, it was no longer curiosity; it was a beginning of anxiety.

Cosette drew from the envelope its contents, a little note-book of paper, each page of which was numbered and bore a few lines in a very fine and rather pretty handwriting, as Cosette thought.

Cosette looked for a name; there was none. To whom was this addressed? To her, probably, since a hand had deposited the packet on her bench. From whom did it come? An irresistible fascination took possession of her; she tried to turn away her eyes from the leaflets which were trembling in her hand, she gazed at the sky, the street, the acacias all bathed in light, the pigeons fluttering over a neighboring roof, and then her glance suddenly fell upon the manuscript, and she said to herself that she must know what it contained.

This is what she read.

IV. — A HEART BENEATH A STONE.

THE reduction of the universe to a single being, the expansion of a single being even to God, that is love.

Love is the salutation of the angels to the stars.

How sad is the soul, when it is sad through love!

What a void in the absence of the being who, by herself alone fills the world! Oh! how true it is that the beloved being becomes God. One could comprehend that God might be jealous of this had not God the Father of all evidently made creation for the soul, and the soul for love.

The glimpse of a smile beneath a white crape bonnet with a blue curtain is sufficient to cause the soul to enter into the palace of dreams.

God is behind everything, but everything hides God. Things are black, creatures are opaque. To love a being is to render that being transparent.

Certain thoughts are prayers. There are moments when, whatever the attitude of the body may be, the soul is on its knees.

Parted lovers beguile absence by a thousand chimerical devices, which possess, however, a reality of their own. They are prevented from seeing each other, they cannot write to each other; they discover a multitude of mysterious means to correspond. They send each other the song of the birds, the perfume of the flowers, the smiles of children, the light of the sun, the sighings of the breeze, the rays of stars, all creation. And why not? All the works of God are made to serve love. Love is sufficiently potent to charge all nature with its messages.

Oh Spring! Thou art a letter that I write to her.

The future belongs to hearts even more than it does to minds. Love, that is the only thing that can occupy and fill eternity. In the infinite, the inexhaustible is requisite.

Love participates of the soul itself. It is of the same nature. Like it, it is the divine spark; like it, it is incorruptible, indivisible, imperishable. It is a point of fire that exists within us, which is immortal and infinite, which nothing can confine, and which nothing can extinguish. We feel it burning even to the very marrow of our bones, and we see it beaming in the very depths of heaven.

Oh Love! Adorations! voluptuousness of two minds which understand each other, of two hearts which exchange with each other, of two glances which penetrate each other! You will come to me, will you not, bliss! strolls by twos in the solitudes! Blessed and radiant days! I have sometimes dreamed that from time to time hours detached themselves from the lives of the angels and came here below to traverse the destinies of men.

God can add nothing to the happiness of those who love, except to give them endless duration. After a life of love, an

eternity of love is, in fact, an augmentation ; but to increase in intensity even the ineffable felicity which love bestows on the soul even in this world, is impossible, even to God. God is the plenitude of heaven ; love is the plenitude of man.

You look at a star for two reasons, because it is luminous, and because it is impenetrable. You have beside you a sweeter radiance and a greater mystery, woman.

All of us, whoever we may be, have our respirable beings. We lack air and we stifle. Then we die. To die for lack of love is horrible. Suffocation of the soul.

When love has fused and mingled two beings in a sacred and angelic unity, the secret of life has been discovered so far as they are concerned ; they are no longer anything more than the two boundaries of the same destiny ; they are no longer anything but the two wings of the same spirit. Love, soar.

On the day when a woman as she passes before you emits light as she walks, you are lost, you love. But one thing remains for you to do : to think of her so intently that she is constrained to think of you.

What love commences can be finished by God alone.

True love is in despair and is enchanted over a glove lost or a handkerchief found, and eternity is required for its devotion and its hopes. It is composed both of the infinitely great and the infinitely little.

If you are a stone, be adamant ; if you are a plant, be the sensitive plant ; if you are a man, be love.

Nothing suffices for love. We have happiness, we desire paradise ; we possess paradise, we desire heaven.

Oh ye who love each other, all this is contained in love. Understand how to find it there. Love has contemplation as well as heaven, and more than heaven, it has voluptuousness.

“Does she still come to the Luxembourg?” “No, sir.”
“This is the church where she attends mass, is it not?” “She no longer comes here.” “Does she still live in this house?”

"She has moved away." "Where has she gone to dwell?"
 "She did not say."

What a melancholy thing not to know the address of one's soul!

Love has its childishness, other passions have their pettinesses. Shame on the passions which belittle man! Honor to the one which makes a child of him!

There is one strange thing, do you know it? I dwell in the night. There is a being who carried off my sky when she went away.

Oh! would that we were lying side by side in the same grave, hand in hand, and from time to time, in the darkness, gently caressing a finger, — that would suffice for my eternity!

Ye who suffer because ye love, love yet more. To die of love, is to live in it.

Love. A sombre and starry transfiguration is mingled with this torture. There is ecstasy in agony.

Oh joy of the birds! It is because they have nests that they sing.

Love is a celestial respiration of the air of paradise.

Deep hearts, sage minds, take life as God has made it; it is a long trial, an incomprehensible preparation for an unknown destiny. ~~This~~ ^{His} destiny, the true one, begins for man with the first step inside the tomb. Then something appears to him, and he begins to distinguish the definitive. The definitive, meditate upon that word. The living perceive the infinite; the definitive permits itself to be seen only by the dead. In the meanwhile, love and suffer, hope and contemplate. Woe, alas! to him who shall have loved only bodies, forms, appearances! Death will deprive him of all. Try to love souls, you will find them again.

I encountered in the street, a very poor young man who was in love. His hat was old, his coat was worn, his elbows were in holes; water trickled through his shoes, and the stars through his soul.

What a grand thing it is to be loved! What a far grander thing it is to love! The heart becomes heroic, by dint of

passion. It is no longer composed of anything but what is pure; it no longer rests on anything that is not elevated and great. An unworthy thought can no more germinate in it, than a nettle on a glacier. The serene and lofty soul, inaccessible to vulgar passions and emotions, dominating the clouds and the shades of this world, its follies, its lies, its hatreds, its vanities, its miseries, inhabits the blue of heaven, and no longer feels anything but profound and subterranean shocks of destiny, as the crests of mountains feel the shocks of earthquake.

If there did not exist some one who loved, the sun would become extinct.

V.—COSETTE AFTER THE LETTER.

As Cosette read, she gradually fell into thought. At the very moment when she raised her eyes from the last line of the note-book, the handsome officer passed triumphantly in front of the gate,—it was his hour; Cosette thought him hideous.

She resumed her contemplation of the book. It was written in the most charming of chirography, thought Cosette; in the same hand, but with divers inks, sometimes very black, again whitish, as when ink has been added to the inkstand, and consequently on different days. It was, then, a mind which had unfolded itself there, sigh by sigh, irregularly, without order, without choice, without object, hap-hazard. Cosette had never read anything like it. This manuscript, in which she already perceived more light than obscurity, produced upon her the effect of a half-open sanctuary. Each one of these mysterious lines shone before her eyes and inundated her heart with a strange radiance. The education which she had received had always talked to her of the soul, and never of love, very much as one might talk of the firebrand and not of the flame. This manuscript of fifteen pages suddenly and sweetly revealed to her all of love, sorrow, destiny, life, eternity, the beginning, the end. It was as if a hand had opened and suddenly flung upon her a handful of rays of light. In these few lines she felt a passionate, ardent, generous, honest nature, a sacred will, an immense sorrow, and an immense despair, a suffering heart, an ecstasy fully expanded. What was this manuscript? A letter. A letter without name, without address, without date, without signature, pressing and disinterested, an enigma composed of truths, a message of love made to be brought by an angel and read by a virgin, an appointment made beyond

the bounds of earth, the love-letter of a phantom to a shade. It was an absent one, tranquil and dejected, who seemed ready to take refuge in death and who sent to the absent love, his lady, the secret of fate, the key of life, love. This had been written with one foot in the grave and one finger in heaven. These lines, which had fallen one by one on the paper, were what might be called drops of soul.

Now, from whom could these pages come? Who could have penned them?

Cosette did not hesitate a moment. One man only.

He!

Day had dawned once more in her spirit; all had reappeared. She felt an unheard-of joy, and a profound anguish. It was he! he who had written! he was there! it was he whose arm had been thrust through that railing! While she was forgetful of him, he had found her again! But had she forgotten him? No, never! She was foolish to have thought so for a single moment. She had always loved him, always adored him. The fire had been smothered, and had smouldered for a time, but she saw all plainly now; it had but made headway, and now it had burst forth afresh, and had inflamed her whole being. This note-book was like a spark which had fallen from that other soul into hers. She felt the conflagration starting up once more.

She imbued herself thoroughly with every word of the manuscript: "Oh yes!" said she, "how perfectly I recognize all that! That is what I had already read in his eyes." As she was finishing it for the third time, Lieutenant Théodule passed the gate once more, and rattled his spurs upon the pavement. Cosette was forced to raise her eyes. She thought him insipid, silly, stupid, useless, foppish, displeasing, impertinent, and extremely ugly. The officer thought it his duty to smile at her.

She turned away as in shame and indignation. She would gladly have thrown something at his head.

She fled, re-entered the house, and shut herself up in her chamber to peruse the manuscript once more, to learn it by heart, and to dream. When she had thoroughly mastered it she kissed it and put it in her bosom.

All was over, Cosette had fallen back into deep, seraphic love. The abyss of Eden had yawned once more.

All day long, Cosette remained in a sort of bewilderment. She scarcely thought, her ideas were in the state of a tangled skein in her brain, she could not manage to conjecture anything, she hoped through a tremor, what? vague things. She

dared make herself no promises, and she did not wish to refuse herself anything. Flashes of pallor passed over her countenance, and shivers ran through her frame. It seemed to her, at intervals, that she was entering the land of chimæras ; she said to herself : “ Is this reality ? ” Then she felt of the dear paper within her bosom under her gown, she pressed it to her heart, she felt its angles against her flesh ; and if Jean Valjean had seen her at the moment, he would have shuddered in the presence of that luminous and unknown joy, which overflowed from beneath her eyelids. — “ Oh yes ! ” she thought, “ it is certainly he ! This comes from him, and is for me ! ”

And she told herself that an intervention of the angels, a celestial chance, had given him back to her.

Oh transfiguration of love ! Oh dreams ! That celestial chance, that intervention of the angels, was a pellet of bread tossed by one thief to another thief, from the Charlemagne Courtyard to the Lion’s Ditch, over the roofs of La Force.

VI. — OLD PEOPLE ARE MADE TO GO OUT OPPORTUNELY.

WHEN evening came, Jean Valjean went out ; Cosette dressed herself. She arranged her hair in the most becoming manner, and she put on a dress whose bodice had received one snip of the scissors too much, and which, through this slope permitted a view of the beginning of her throat, and was, as young girls say, “ a trifle indecent.” It was not in the least indecent, but it was prettier than usual. She made her toilet thus without knowing why she did so.

Did she mean to go out ? No.

Was she expecting a visitor ? No.

At dusk, she went down to the garden. Toussaint was busy in her kitchen, which opened on the back yard.

She began to stroll about under the trees, thrusting aside the branches from time to time with her hand, because there were some which hung very low.

In this manner she reached the bench.

The stone was still there.

She sat down, and gently laid her white hand on this stone as though she wished to caress and thank it.

All at once, she experienced that indefinable impression which one undergoes, when there is some one standing behind one, even when she does not see the person.

She turned her head and rose to her feet.

It was he.

His head was bare. He appeared to have grown thin and pale. His black clothes were hardly discernible. The twilight threw a wan light on his fine brow, and covered his eyes in shadows. Beneath a veil of incomparable sweetness, he had something about him that suggested death and night. His face was illuminated by the light of the dying day, and by the thought of a soul that is taking flight.

He seemed to be not yet a ghost, and he was no longer a man.

He had flung away his hat in the thicket, a few paces distant.

Cosette, though ready to swoon, uttered no cry. She retreated slowly, for she felt herself attracted. He did not stir. By virtue of something ineffable and melancholy which enveloped him, she felt the look in his eyes which she could not see.

Cosette, in her retreat, encountered a tree and leaned against it. Had it not been for this tree, she would have fallen.

Then she heard his voice, that voice which she had really never heard, barely rising above the rustle of the leaves, and murmuring:—

“Pardon me, here I am. My heart is full. I could not live on as I was living, and I have come. Have you read what I placed there on the bench? Do you recognize me at all? Have no fear of me. It is a long time, you remember the day, since you looked at me at the Luxembourg, near the Gladiator. And the day when you passed before me? It was on the 16th of June and the 2d of July. It is nearly a year ago. I have not seen you for a long time. I inquired of the woman who let the chairs, and she told me that she no longer saw you. You lived in the Rue de l’Ouest, on the third floor, in the front apartments of a new house,—you see that I know! I followed you. What else was there for me to do? And then you disappeared. I thought I saw you pass once, while I was reading the newspapers under the arcade of the Odéon. I ran after you. But no. It was a person who had a bonnet like yours. At night, I came hither. Do not be afraid, no one sees me. I come to gaze upon your windows near at hand. I walk very softly, so that you may not hear, for you might be alarmed. The other evening I was behind you, you turned round, I fled. Once, I heard you singing. I was happy. Did it affect you, because I heard you singing through the shutters? That could not hurt you. No, it is not so? You see, you are my angel! Let me come sometimes; I think that I am going to die. If you only knew! I adore you. Forgive me, I speak to you, but I do not know what I am saying; I may have displeased you; have I displeased you?”

"O! my mother!" said she.

And she sank down as though on the point of death.

He grasped her, she fell, he took her in his arms, he pressed her close without knowing what he was doing. He supported her, though he was tottering himself. It was as though his brain were full of smoke; lightnings darted between his lips; his ideas vanished; it seemed to him that he was accomplishing some religious act, and that he was committing a profanation. Moreover, he had not the least passion for this lovely woman whose force he felt against his breast. He was beside himself with love.

She took his hand and laid it on her heart. He felt the paper there, he stammered:—

"You love me, then?"

She replied in a voice so low that it was no longer anything more than a barely audible breath:—

"Hush! Thou knowest it!"

And she hid her blushing face on the breast of the superb and intoxicated young man.

He fell upon the bench, and she beside him. They had no words more. The stars were beginning to gleam. How did it come to pass that their lips met? How comes it to pass that the birds sing, that snow melts, that the rose unfolds, that May expands, that the dawn grows white behind the black trees on the shivering crest of the hills?

A kiss, and that was all.

Both started, and gazed into the darkness with sparkling eyes.

They felt neither the cool night, nor the cold stone, nor the damp earth, nor the wet grass; they looked at each other, and their hearts were full of thoughts. They had clasped hands unconsciously.

She did not ask him, she did not even wonder, how he had entered there, and how he had made his way into the garden. It seemed so simple to her that he should be there!

From time to time, Marius' knee touched Cosette's knee, and both shivered.

At intervals, Cosette stammered a word. Her soul fluttered on her lips like a drop of dew on a flower.

Little by little they began to talk to each other. Effusion followed silence, which is fulness. The night was serene and splendid overhead. These two beings, pure as spirits, told each other everything, their dreams, their intoxications, their ecstasies, their chimæras, their weaknesses, how they had adored each

other from afar, how they had longed for each other, their despair when they had ceased to see each other. They confided to each other in an ideal intimacy, which nothing could augment, their most secret and most mysterious thoughts. They related to each other, with candid faith in their illusions, all that love, youth, and the remains of childhood which still lingered about them, suggested to their minds. Their two hearts poured themselves out into each other in such wise, that at the expiration of a quarter of an hour, it was the young man who had the young girl's soul, and the young girl who had the young man's soul. Each became permeated with the other, they were enchanted with each other, they dazzled each other.

When they had finished, when they had told each other everything, she laid her head on his shoulder and asked him:—

“What is your name?”

“My name is Marius,” said he. “And yours?”

“My name is Cosette.”



BOOK SIXTH. — LITTLE GAVROCHE.

I. — THE MALICIOUS PLAYFULNESS OF THE WIND.

SINCE 1823, when the tavern of Montfermeil was on the way to shipwreck and was being gradually engulfed, not in the abyss of a bankruptcy, but in the cesspool of petty debts, the Thénardier pair had had two other children; both males. That made five; two girls and three boys.

Madame Thénardier had got rid of the last two, while they were still young and very small, with remarkable luck.

Got rid of is the word. There was but a mere fragment of nature in that woman. A phenomenon, by the way, of which there is more than one example extant. Like the Maréchale de La Mothe-Houdancourt, the Thénardier was a mother to her daughters only. There her maternity ended. Her hatred of the human race began with her own sons. In the direction of her sons her evil disposition was uncompromising, and her heart had a lugubrious wall in that quarter. As the reader has seen, she detested the eldest; she cursed the other two. Why? Because. The most terrible of motives, the most unanswerable

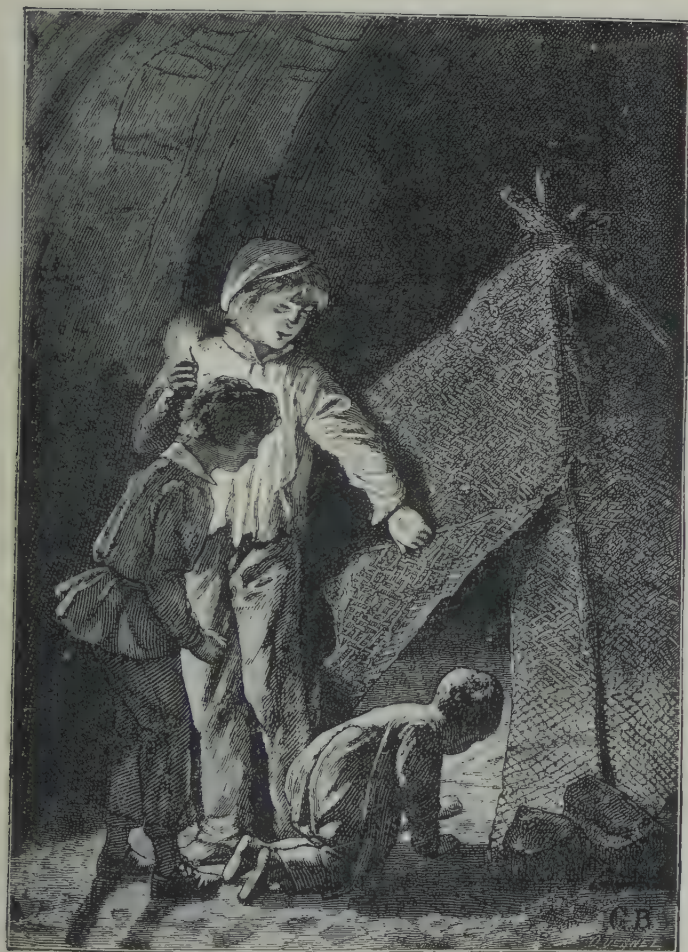
of retorts—Because. “I have no need of a litter of squalling brats,” said this mother.

Let us explain how the Thénardiens had succeeded in getting rid of their last two children; and even in drawing profit from the operation.

The woman Magnon, who was mentioned a few pages further back, was the same one who had succeeded in making old Gillenormand support the two children which she had had. She lived on the Quai des Célestins, at the corner of this ancient street of the Petit-Musc which afforded her the opportunity of changing her evil repute into good odor. The reader will remember the great epidemic of croup which ravaged the river districts of the Seine in Paris thirty-five years ago, and of which science took advantage to make experiments on a grand scale as to the efficacy of inhalations of alum, so beneficially replaced at the present day by the external tincture of iodine. During this epidemic, the Magnon lost both her boys, who were still very young, one in the morning, the other in the evening of the same day. This was a blow. These children were precious to their mother; they represented eighty francs a month. These eighty francs were punctually paid in the name of M. Gillenormand, by collector of his rents, M. Barge, a retired tip-staff, in the Rue du Roi-de-Sicile. The children dead, the income was at an end. The Magnon sought an expedient. In that dark free-masonry of evil of which she formed a part, everything is known, all secrets are kept, and all lend mutual aid. Magnon needed two children; the Thénardiens had two. The same sex, the same age. A good arrangement for the one, a good investment for the other. The little Thénardiens became little Magnons. Magnon quitted the Quai des Célestins and went to live in the Rue Clocheperce. In Paris, the identity which binds an individual to himself is broken between one street and another.

The registry office being in no way warned, raised no objections, and the substitution was effected in the most simple manner in the world. Only, the Thénardier exacted for this loan of her children, ten francs a month, which Magnon promised to pay, and which she actually did pay. It is unnecessary to add that M. Gillenormand continued to perform his compact. He came to see the children every six months. He did not perceive the change. “Monsieur,” Magnon said to him, “how much they resemble you!”

Thénardier, to whom avatars were easy, seized this occasion to become Jondrette. His two daughters and Gavroche had



LITTLE GAVROCHE.

hardly had time to discover that they had two little brothers. When a certain degree of misery is reached, one is overpowered with a sort of spectral indifference, and one regards human beings as though they were spectres. Your nearest relations are often no more for you than vague shadowy forms, barely outlined against a nebulous background of life and easily confounded again with the invisible.

On the evening of the day when she had handed over her two little ones to Magnon, with express intention of renouncing them forever, the Thénardier had felt, or had appeared to feel, a scruple. She said to her husband: "But this is abandoning our children!" Thénardier, masterful and phlegmatic, cauterized the scruple with this saying: "Jean Jacques Rousseau did even better!" From scruples, the mother proceeded to uneasiness: "But what if the police were to annoy us? Tell me, Monsieur Thénardier, is what we have done permissible?" Thénardier replied: "Everything is permissible. No one will see anything but true blue in it. Besides, no one has any interest in looking closely after children who have not a sou."

Magnon was a sort of fashionable woman in the sphere of crime. She was careful about her toilet. She shared her lodgings, which were furnished in an affected and wretched style, with a clever gallicized English thief. This English woman, who had become a naturalized Parisienne, recommended by very wealthy relations, intimately connected with the medals in the Library and Mademoiselle Mar's diamonds, became celebrated later on in judicial accounts. She was called *Mamselle Miss*.

The two little creatures who had fallen to Magnon had no reason to complain of their lot. Recommended by the eighty francs, they were well cared for, as is everything from which profit is derived; they were neither badly clothed, nor badly fed; they were treated almost like "little gentlemen," — better by their false mother than by their real one. Magnon played the lady, and talked no thieves' slang in their presence.

Thus passed several years. Thénardier augured well from the fact. One day, he chanced to say to Magnon as she handed him his monthly stipend of ten francs: "The father must give them some education."

All at once, these two poor children, who had up to that time been protected tolerably well, even by their evil fate, were abruptly hurled into life and forced to begin it for themselves.

A wholesale arrest of malefactors, like that in the Jondrette

garret, necessarily complicated by investigations and subsequent incarcerations, is a veritable disaster for that hideous and occult counter-society which pursues its existence beneath public society; an adventure of this description entails all sorts of catastrophes in that sombre world. The Thénardier catastrophe involved the catastrophe of Magnon.

One day, a short time after Magnon had handed to Éponine the note relating to the Rue Plumet, a sudden raid was made by the police in the Rue Clocheperce; Magnon was seized, as was also Mamselle Miss; and all the inhabitants of the house, which was of a suspicious character, were gathered into the net. While this was going on, the two little boys were playing in the back yard, and saw nothing of the raid. When they tried to enter the house again, they found the door fastened and the house empty. A cobbler opposite called them to him, and delivered to them a paper which "their mother" had left for them. On this paper there was an address: *M. Barge, collector of rents, Rue du Roi-de-Sicile, No. 8*. The proprietor of the stall said to them: "You cannot live here any longer. Go there. It is near by. The first street on the left. Ask your way from this paper."

The children set out, the elder leading the younger, and holding in his hand the paper which was to guide them. It was cold, and his benumbed little fingers could not close very firmly, and they did not keep a very good hold on the paper. At the corner of the Rue Clocheperce, a gust of wind tore it from him, and as night was falling, the child was not able to find it again.

They began to wander aimlessly through the streets.

II.—IN WHICH LITTLE GAVROCHE EXTRACTS PROFIT FROM NAPOLEON THE GREAT.

SPRING in Paris is often traversed by harsh and piercing breezes which do not precisely chill but freeze one; these north winds which sadden the most beautiful days produce exactly the effect of those puffs of cold air which enter a warm room through the cracks of a badly fitting door or window. It seems as though the gloomy door of winter had remained ajar, and as though the wind were pouring through it. In the spring of 1832, the epoch when the first great epidemic of this century broke out in Europe, these north gales were more harsh and piercing than ever. It was a door even more glacial than that of winter

which was ajar. It was the door of the sepulchre. In these winds one felt the breath of the cholera.

From a meteorological point of view, these cold winds possessed this peculiarity, that they did not preclude a strong electric tension. Frequent storms, accompanied by thunder and lightning, burst forth at this epoch.

One evening, when these gales were blowing rudely, to such a degree that January seemed to have returned and that the bourgeois had resumed their cloaks, Little Gavroche, who was always shivering gayly under his rags, was standing as though in ecstasy before a wig-maker's shop in the vicinity of the Orme-Saint-Gervais. He was adorned with a woman's woollen shawl, picked up no one knows where, and which he had converted into a neck comforter. Little Gavroche appeared to be engaged in intent admiration of a wax bride, in a low-necked dress, and crowned with orange-flowers, who was revolving in the window, and displaying her smile to passers-by, between two argand lamps; but in reality, he was taking an observation of the shop, in order to discover whether he could not "prig" from the shop-front a cake of soap, which he would then proceed to sell for a sou to a "hair-dresser" in the suburbs. He had often managed to breakfast off of such a roll. He called his species of work, for which he possessed special aptitude, "shaving barbers."

While contemplating the bride, and eyeing the cake of soap, he muttered between his teeth: "Tuesday. It was not Tuesday. Was it Tuesday? Perhaps it was Tuesday. Yes, it was Tuesday."

No one has ever discovered to what this monologue referred.

Yes, perchance, this monologue had some connection with the last occasion on which he had dined, three days before, for it was now Friday.

The barber in his shop, which was warmed by a good stove, was shaving a customer and casting a glance from time to time at the enemy, that freezing and impudent street urchin both of whose hands were in his pockets, but whose mind was evidently unsheathed.

While Gavroche was scrutinizing the shop-window and the cakes of windsor soap, two children of unequal stature, very neatly dressed, and still smaller than himself, one apparently about seven years of age, the other five, timidly turned the handle and entered the shop, with a request for something or other, alms possibly, in a plaintive murmur which resembled a groan rather than a prayer. They both spoke at once, and

their words were unintelligible because sobs broke the voice of the younger, and the teeth of the elder were chattering with the cold. The barber wheeled round with a furious look, and without abandoning his razor, thrust back the elder with his left hand and the younger with his knee, and slammed his door, saying: "The idea of coming in and freezing everybody for nothing!"

The two children resumed their march in tears. In the meantime, a cloud had risen; it had begun to rain.

Little Gavroche ran after them and accosted them:—

"What's the matter with you, brats?"

"We don't know where we are to sleep," replied the elder.

"Is that all?" said Gavroche. "A great matter, truly. The idea of bawling about that. They must be greenies!"

And adopting, in addition to his superiority, which was rather bantering, an accent of tender authority and gentle patronage:—

"Come along with me, young 'uns!"

"Yes, sir," said the elder.

And the two children followed him as they would have followed an archbishop. They had stopped crying.

Gavroche led them up the Rue Saint-Antoine in the direction of the Bastille.

As Gavroche walked along, he cast an indignant backward glance at the barber's shop.

"That fellow has no heart, the whiting,"¹ he muttered. "He's an Englishman."

A woman who caught sight of these three marching in a file, with Gavroche at their head, burst into noisy laughter. This laugh was wanting in respect towards the group.

"Good day, Mamselle Omnibus," said Gavroche to her.

An instant later, the wig-maker occurred to his mind once more, and he added:—

"I am making a mistake in the beast; he's not a whiting, he's a serpent. Barber, I'll go and fetch a locksmith, and I'll have a bell hung to your tail."

This wig-maker had rendered him aggressive. As he strode over a gutter, he apostrophized a bearded portress who was worthy to meet Faust on the Brocken, and who had a broom in her hand.

"Madam," said he, "so you are going out with your horse?"

¹ *Merlan*: a sobriquet given to hairdressers because they are white with powder.

And thereupon, he spattered the polished boots of a pedestrian.

"You scamp!" shouted the furious pedestrian.

Gavroche elevated his nose above his shawl.

"Is Monsieur complaining?"

"Of you!" ejaculated the man.

"The office is closed," said Gavroche, "I do not receive any more complaints."

In the meanwhile, as he went on up the street, he perceived a beggar-girl, thirteen or fourteen years old, and clad in so short a gown that her knees were visible, lying thoroughly chilled under a porte-cochère. The little girl was getting to be too old for such a thing. Growth does play these tricks. The petticoat becomes short at the moment when nudity becomes indecent.

"Poor girl!" said Gavroche. "She hasn't even trousers. Hold on, take this."

And unwinding all the comfortable woollen which he had around his neck, he flung it on the thin and purple shoulders of the beggar-girl, where the scarf became a shawl once more.

The child stared at him in astonishment, and received the shawl in silence. When a certain stage of distress has been reached in his misery, the poor man no longer groans over evil, no longer returns thanks for good.

That done: "Brrr!" said Gavroche, who was shivering more than Saint Martin, for the latter retained one half of his cloak.

At this *brrr!* the downpour of rain, redoubling its spite, became furious. The wicked skies punish good deeds.

"Ah, come now!" exclaimed Gavroche, "what's the meaning of this? It's re-raining! Good Heavens, if it goes on like this, I shall stop my subscription."

And he set out on the march once more.

"It's all right," he resumed, casting a glance at the beggar-girl, as she coiled up under the shawl, "she's got a famous peel."

And looking up at the clouds he exclaimed:—

"Caught!"

The two children followed close on his heels.

As they were passing one of these heavy grated lattices, which indicate a baker's shop, for bread is put behind bars like gold, Gavroche turned round:—

"Ah, by the way, brats, have we dined?"

"Monsieur," replied the elder, "we have had nothing to eat since this morning."

"So you have neither father nor mother?" resumed Gavroche majestically.

"Excuse us, sir, we have a papa and a mamma, but we don't know where they are."

"Sometimes that's better than knowing where they are," said Gavroche, who was a thinker.

"We have been wandering about these two hours," continued the elder, "we have hunted for things at the corners of the streets, but we have found nothing."

"I know," ejaculated Gavroche, "it's the dogs who eat everything."

He went on, after a pause:—

"Ah! we have lost our authors. We don't know what we have done with them. This should not be, gamins. It's stupid to let old people stray off like that. Come now! we must have a snooze all the same."

However, he asked them no questions. What was more simple than that they should have no dwelling-place!

The elder of the two children, who had almost entirely recovered the prompt heedlessness of childhood, uttered this exclamation:—

"It's queer, all the same. Mamma told us that she would take us to get a blessed spray on Palm Sunday."

"Bosh," said Gavroche.

"Mamma," resumed the elder, "is a lady who lives with Mamselle Miss."

"Tanfûte!" retorted Gavroche.

Meanwhile he had halted, and for the last two minutes, he had been feeling and fumbling in all sorts of nooks which his rags contained.

At last he tossed his head with an air intended to be merely satisfied, but which was triumphant, in reality.

"Let us be calm, young 'uns. Here's supper for three."

And from one of his pockets he drew forth a sou.

Without allowing the two urchins time for amazement, he pushed both of them before him into the baker's shop, and flung his sou on the counter, crying:—

"Boy! five centimes' worth of bread."

The baker, who was the proprietor in person, took up a loaf and a knife.

"In three pieces, my boy!" went on Gavroche.

And he added with dignity:—

"There are three of us."

And seeing that the baker, after scrutinizing the three cus-

tomers had taken down a black loaf, he thrust his finger far up his nose with an inhalation as imperious as though he had had a pinch of the great Frederick's snuff on the tip of his thumb, and hurled this indignant apostrophe full in the baker's face:—

“Keksekça?”

Those of our readers who might be tempted to espy in this interpellation of Gavroche's to the baker a Russian or a Polish word, or one of those savage cries which the Yoways and the Botocudos hurl at each other from bank to bank of a river, athwart the solitudes, are warned that it is a word which they [our readers] utter every day, and which takes the place of the phrase: “Qu'est-ce que c'est que cela?” The baker understood perfectly, and replied:—

“Well! It's bread, and very good bread of the second quality.”

“You mean *larton brutal* [black bread]!” retorted Gavroche, calmly and coldly disdainful. “White bread, boy! white bread [*larton savonné*]! I'm standing treat.”

The baker could not repress a smile, and as he cut the white bread, he surveyed them in a compassionate way which shocked Gavroche.

“Come now, baker's boy!” said he, “what are you taking our measure like that for?”

All three of them placed end to end would have hardly made a measure.

When the bread was cut, the baker threw the sou into his drawer, and Gavroche said to the two children:—

“Grub away.”

The little boys stared at him in surprise.

Gavroche began to laugh.

“Ah! hullo, that's so! they don't understand yet, they're too small.”

And he repeated:—

“Eat away.”

At the same time, he held out a piece of bread to each of them.

And thinking that the elder, who seemed to him the more worthy of his conversation, deserved some special encouragement and ought to be relieved from all hesitation to satisfy his appetite, he added, as he handed him the largest share:—

“Ram that into your muzzle.”

One piece was smaller than the others; he kept this for himself.

The poor children, including Gavroche, were famished. As

they tore their bread apart in big mouthfuls, they blocked up the shop of the baker, who, now that they had paid their money, looked angrily at them.

"Let's go into the street again," said Gavroche.

They set off once more in the direction of the Bastille.

From time to time, as they passed the lighted shop-windows, the smallest halted to look at the time on a leaden watch which was suspended from his neck by a cord.

"Well, he is a very green 'un," said Gavroche.

Then, becoming thoughtful, he muttered between his teeth:—

"All the same, if I had charge of the babes I'd lock 'em up better than that."

Just as they were finishing their morsel of bread, and had reached the angle of that gloomy Rue des Ballets, at the other end of which the low and threatening wicket of La Force was visible:—

"Hullo, is that you, Gavroche?" said some one.

"Hullo, is that you, Montparnasse?" said Gavroche.

A man had just accosted the street urchin, and the man was no other than Montparnasse in disguise, with blue spectacles, but recognizable to Gavroche.

"The bow-wows!" went on Gavroche, "you've got a hide the color of a linseed plaster, and blue specs like a doctor. You're putting on style, 'pon my word!"

"Hush!" ejaculated Montparnasse, "not so loud."

And he drew Gavroche hastily out of range of the lighted shops.

The two little ones followed mechanically, holding each other by the hand.

When they were ensconced under the arch of a porte-cochère, sheltered from the rain and from all eyes:—

"Do you know where I'm going?" demanded Montparnasse.

"To the Abbey of Ascend-with-Regret,"¹ replied Gavroche.

"Joker!"

And Montparnasse went on:—

"I'm going to find Babet."

"Ah!" exclaimed Gavroche, "so her name is Babet."

Montparnasse lowered his voice:—

"Not she, he."

"Ah! Babet."

"Yes, Babet."

"I thought he was buckled."

"He has undone the buckle," replied Montparnasse.

¹ The scaffold.

And he rapidly related to the gamin how, on the morning of that very day, Babet, having been transferred to La Conciergerie, had made his escape, by turning to the left instead of to the right in "the police office."

Gavroche expressed his admiration for this skill.

"What a dentist!" he cried.

Montparnasse added a few details as to Babet's flight, and ended with:—

"Oh! That's not all."

Gavroche, as he listened, had seized a cane that Montparnasse held in his hand, and mechanically pulled at the upper part, and the blade of a dagger made its appearance.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, pushing the dagger back in haste, "you have brought along your gendarme disguised as a bourgeois."

Montparnasse winked.

"The deuce!" resumed Gavroche, "so you're going to have a bout with the bobbies?"

"You can't tell," replied Montparnasse with an indifferent air. "It's always a good thing to have a pin about one."

Gavroche persisted:—

"What are you up to to-night?"

Again Montparnasse took a grave tone, and said, mouthing every syllable: "Things."

And abruptly changing the conversation:—

"By the way!"

"What!"

"Something happened t'other day. Fancy. I meet a bourgeois. He makes me a present of a sermon and his purse. I put it in my pocket. A minute later, I feel in my pocket. There's nothing there."

"Except the sermon," said Gavroche.

"But you," went on Montparnasse, "where are you bound for now?"

Gavroche pointed to his two protégés, and said:—

"I'm going to put these infants to bed."

"Whereabouts is the bed?"

"At my house."

"Where's your house?"

"At my house."

"So you have a lodging?"

"Yes, I have."

"And where is your lodging?"

"In the elephant," said Gavroche.

Montparnasse, though not naturally inclined to astonishment, could not restrain an exclamation.

"In the elephant!"

"Well, yes, in the elephant!" retorted Gavroche. "Kek-
çaa?"

This is another word of the language which no one writes, and which every one speaks.

Kekçaa signifies: *Qu'est que c'est que cela a?* [What's the matter with that?]

The urchin's profound remark recalled Montparnasse to calmness and good sense. He appeared to return to better sentiments with regard to Gavroche's lodging.

"Of course," said he, "yes, the elephant. Is it comfortable there?"

"Very," said Gavroche. "It's really bully there. There ain't any draughts, as there are under the bridges."

"How do you get in?"

"Oh, I get in."

"So there is a hole?" demanded Montparnasse.

"Parbleu! I should say so. But you mustn't tell. It's between the fore legs. The bobbies haven't seen it."

"And you climb up? Yes, I understand."

"A turn of the hand, cric, crac, and it's all over, no one there."

After a pause, Gavroche added:—

"I shall have a ladder for these children."

Montparnasse burst out laughing:—

"Where the devil did you pick up those young 'uns?"

Gavroche replied with great simplicity:—

"They are some brats that a wig-maker made me a present of."

Meanwhile, Montparnasse had fallen to thinking:—

"You recognized me very readily," he muttered.

He took from his pocket two small objects which were nothing more than two quills wrapped in cotton, and thrust one up each of his nostrils. This gave him a different nose.

"That changes you," remarked Gavroche, "you are less homely so, you ought to keep them on all the time."

Montparnasse was a handsome fellow, but Gavroche was a tease.

"Seriously," demanded Montparnasse, "how do you like me so?"

The sound of his voice was different also. In a twinkling, Montparnasse had become unrecognizable.

"Oh! Do play Porrichinelle for us!" exclaimed Gavroche.

The two children, who had not been listening up to this point, being occupied themselves in thrusting their fingers up their noses, drew near at this name, and stared at Montparnasse with dawning joy and admiration.

Unfortunately, Montparnasse was troubled.

He laid his hand on Gavroche's shoulder, and said to him, emphasizing his words: "Listen to what I tell you, boy! if I were on the square with my dog, my knife, and my wife, and if you were to squander ten sous on me, I wouldn't refuse to work, but this isn't Shrove Tuesday."

This odd phrase produced a singular effect on the gamin. He wheeled round hastily, darted his little sparkling eyes about him with profound attention, and perceived a police sergeant standing with his back to them a few paces off. Gavroche allowed an: "Ah! good!" to escape him, but immediately suppressed it, and shaking Montparnasse's hand:—

"Well, good evening," said he, "I'm going off to my elephant with my brats. Supposing that you should need me some night, you can come and hunt me up there. I lodge on the entresol. There is no porter. You will inquire for Monsieur Gavroche."

"Very good," said Montparnasse.

And they parted, Montparnasse betaking himself in the direction of the Grève, and Gavroche towards the Bastille. The little one of five, dragged along by his brother who was dragged by Gavroche, turned his head back several times to watch "Porrichinelle" as he went.

The ambiguous phrase by means of which Montparnasse had warned Gavroche of the presence of the policeman, contained no other talisman than the assonance *dig* repeated five or six times in different forms. This syllable, *dig*, uttered alone or artistically mingled with the words of a phrase, means: "Take care, we can no longer talk freely." There was besides, in Montparnasse's sentence, a literary beauty which was lost upon Gavroche, that is *mon dogue, ma dauque et ma digue*, a slang expression of the Temple, which signifies my dog, my knife, and my wife, greatly in vogue among clowns and the red-tails in the great century when Molière wrote and Callot drew.

Twenty years ago, there was still to be seen in the southwest corner of the Place de la Bastille, near the basin of the canal, excavated in the ancient ditch of the fortress-prison, a singular monument, which has already been effaced from the memories of Parisians, and which deserved to leave some trace, for it was

the idea of a "member of the Institute, the General-in-chief of the army of Egypt."

We say monument, although it was only a rough model. But this model itself, a marvellous sketch, the grandiose skeleton of an idea of Napoleon's, which successive gusts of wind have carried away and thrown, on each occasion, still further from us, had become historical and had acquired a certain definiteness which contrasted with its provisional aspect. It was an elephant forty feet high, constructed of timber and masonry, bearing on its back a tower which resembled a house, formerly painted green by some dauber, and now painted black by heaven, the wind, and time. In this deserted and unprotected corner of the place, the broad brow of the colossus, his trunk, his tusks, his tower, his enormous crupper, his four feet, like columns produced, at night, under the starry heavens, a surprising and terrible form. It was a sort of symbol of popular force. It was sombre, mysterious, and immense. It was some mighty, visible phantom, one knew not what, standing erect beside the invisible spectre of the Bastille.

Few strangers visited this edifice, no passer-by looked at it. It was falling into ruins; every season, the plaster which detached itself from its sides formed hideous wounds upon it. "The ædiles," as the expression ran in elegant dialect, had forgotten it ever since 1814. There it stood in its corner, melancholy, sick, crumbling, surrounded by a rotten palisade, soiled continually by drunken coachmen; cracks meandered athwart its belly, a lath projected from its tail, tall grass flourished between its legs; and, as the level of the place had been rising all around it for a space of thirty years, by that slow and continuous movement which insensibly elevates the soil of large towns, it stood in a hollow, and it looked as though the ground were giving way beneath it. It was unclean, despised, repulsive, and superb, ugly in the eyes of the bourgeois, melancholy in the eyes of the thinker. There was something about it of the dirt which is on the point of being swept out, and something of the majesty which is on the point of being decapitated. As we have said, at night, its aspect changed. Night is the real element of everything that is dark. As soon as twilight descended, the old elephant became transfigured; he assumed a tranquil and redoubtable appearance in the formidable serenity of the shadows. Being of the past, he belonged to night; and obscurity was in keeping with his grandeur.

This rough, squat, heavy, hard, austere, almost mis-shapen, but assuredly majestic monument, stamped with a sort of mag-

nificent and savage gravity, has disappeared, and left to reign in peace, a sort of gigantic stove, ornamented with its pipe, which has replaced the sombre fortress with its nine towers, very much as the bourgeoisie replaces the feudal classes. It is quite natural that a stove should be the symbol of an epoch in which a pot contains power. This epoch will pass away, people have already begun to understand that, if there can be force in a boiler, there can be no force except in the brain; in other words, that which leads and drags on the world, is not locomotives, but ideas. Harness locomotives to ideas, — that is well done; but do not mistake the horse for the rider.

At all events, to return to the Place de la Bastille, the architect of this elephant succeeded in making a grand thing out of plaster; the architect of the stove has succeeded in making a pretty thing out of bronze.

This stove-pipe, which has been baptized by a sonorous name, and called the column of July, this monument of a revolution that miscarried, was still enveloped in 1832, in an immense shirt of woodwork, which we regret, for our part, and by a vast plank enclosure, which completed the task of isolating the elephant.

It was towards this corner of the place, dimly lighted by the reflection of a distant street lamp, that the gamin guided his two "brats."

The reader must permit us to interrupt ourselves here and to remind him that we are dealing with simple reality, and that twenty years ago, the tribunals were called upon to judge, under the charge of vagabondage, and mutilation of a public monument, a child who had been caught asleep in this very elephant of the Bastille. This fact noted, we proceed.

On arriving in the vicinity of the colossus, Gavroche comprehended the effect which the infinitely great might produce on the infinitely small, and said:—

"Don't be scared, infants."

Then he entered through a gap in the fence into the elephant's enclosure and helped the young ones to clamber through the breach. The two children, somewhat frightened, followed Gavroche without uttering a word, and confided themselves to this little Providence in rags which had given them bread and had promised them a shelter.

There, extended along the fence, lay a ladder which by day served the laborers in the neighboring timber-yard. Gavroche raised it with remarkable vigor, and placed it against one of the elephant's forelegs. Near the point where the ladder ended, a sort of black hole in the belly of the colossus could be distinguished.

Gavroche pointed out the ladder and the hole to his guests, and said to them:—

“Climb up and go in.”

The two little boys exchanged terrified glances.

“You’re afraid, brats!” exclaimed Gavroche.

And he added:—

“You shall see!”

He clasped the rough leg of the elephant, and in a twinkling, without deigning to make use of the ladder, he had reached the aperture. He entered it as an adder slips through a crevice, and disappeared within, and an instant later, the two children saw his head, which looked pale, appear vaguely, on the edge of the shadowy hole, like a wan and whitish spectre.

“Well!” he exclaimed, “climb up, young ’uns! You’ll see how snug it is here! Come up, you!” he said to the elder, “I’ll lend you a hand.”

The little fellows nudged each other, the gamin frightened and inspired them with confidence at one and the same time, and then, it was raining very hard. The elder one undertook the risk. The younger, on seeing his brother climbing up, and himself left alone between the paws of this huge beast, felt greatly inclined to cry, but he did not dare.

The elder lad climbed, with uncertain steps, up the rungs of the ladder; Gavroche, in the meanwhile, encouraging him with exclamations like a fencing-master to his pupils, or a muleteer to his mules.

“Don’t be afraid!—That’s it!—Come on!—Put your feet there!—Give us your hand here!—Boldly!”

And when the child was within reach, he seized him suddenly and vigorously by the arm and pulled him towards him.

“Nabbed!” said he.

The brat had passed through the crack.

“Now,” said Gavroche, “wait for me. Be so good as to take a seat, Monsieur.”

And making his way out of the hole as he had entered it, he slipped down the elephant’s leg with the agility of a monkey, landed on his feet in the grass, grasped the child of five round the body, and planted him fairly in the middle of the ladder, then he began to climb up behind him, shouting to the elder:—

“I’m going to boost him, do you tug.”

And in another instant, the small lad was pushed, dragged, pulled, thrust, stuffed into the hole, before he had time to recover himself, and Gavroche, entering behind him, and repulsing

the ladder with a kick which sent it flat on the grass, began to clap his hands and to cry:—

“Here we are! Long live General Lafayette!”

This explosion over, he added:—

“Now, young ’uns, you are in my house.”

Gavroche was at home, in fact.

Oh, unforeseen utility of the useless! Charity of great things! Goodness of giants! This huge monument, which had embodied an idea of the Emperor’s had become the box of a street urchin. The brat had been accepted and sheltered by the colossus. The bourgeois decked out in their Sunday finery who passed the elephant of the Bastille, were fond of saying as they scanned it disdainfully with their prominent eyes: “What’s the good of that?” It served to save from the cold, the frost, the hail, and rain, to shelter from the winds of winter, to preserve from slumber in the mud which produces fever, and from slumber in the snow which produces death, a little being who had no father, no mother, no bread, no clothes, no refuge. It served to receive the innocent whom society repulsed. It served to diminish public crime. It was a lair open to one against whom all doors were shut. It seemed as though the miserable old mastodon, invaded by vermin and oblivion, covered with warts, with mould, and ulcers, tottering, worm-eaten, abandoned, condemned, a sort of mendicant colossus, asking alms in vain with a benevolent look in the midst of the cross-roads, had taken pity on that other mendicant, the poor pygmy, who roamed without shoes to his feet, without a roof over his head, blowing on his fingers, clad in rags, fed on rejected scraps. That was what the elephant of the Bastille was good for. This idea of Napoleon, disdained by men, had been taken back by God. That which had been merely illustrious, had become august. In order to realize his thought, the Emperor should have had porphyry, brass, iron, gold, marble; the old collection of planks, beams, and plaster sufficed for God. The Emperor had had the dream of a genius; in that Titanic elephant, armed, prodigious, with trunk uplifted, bearing its tower, and scattering on all sides its merry and vivifying waters, he wished to incarnate the people. God had done a grander thing with it, he had lodged a child there.

The hole through which Gavroche had entered was a breach which was hardly visible from the outside, being concealed, as we have stated, beneath the elephant’s belly, and so narrow that it was only cats and homeless children who could pass through it.

"Let's begin," said Gavroche, "by telling the porter that we are not at home."

And plunging into the darkness with the assurance of a person who is well acquainted with his apartments, he took a plank and stopped up the aperture.

Again Gavroche plunged into the obscurity. The children heard the crackling of the match thrust into the phosphoric bottle. The chemical match was not yet in existence; at that epoch, the Fumadé steel represented progress.

A sudden light made them blink; Gavroche had just managed to ignite one of those bits of cord dipped in resin which are called *cellar rats*. The *cellar rat*, which emitted more smoke than light, rendered the interior of the elephant confusedly visible.

Gavroche's two guests glanced about them, and the sensation which they experienced was something like that which one would feel if shut up in the great tun of Heidelberg, or, better still, like what Jonah must have felt in the biblical belly of the whale. An entire and gigantic skeleton appeared enveloping them. Above, a long brown beam, whence started at regular distances, massive, arching ribs, represented the vertebral column with its sides, stalactites of plaster depended from them like entrails, and vast spiders' webs stretching from side to side, formed dirty diaphragms. Here and there, in the corners, were visible large blackish spots which had the appearance of being alive, and which changed places rapidly with an abrupt and frightened movement.

Fragments which had fallen from the elephant's back into his belly had filled up the cavity, so that it was possible to walk upon it as on a floor.

The smaller child nestled up against his brother and whispered to him:—

"It's black."

This remark drew an exclamation from Gavroche. The petrified air of the two brats rendered some shock necessary.

"What's that you're gabbling about there?" he exclaimed. "Are you scoffing at me? Are you turning up your noses? Do you want the Tuileries? Are you brutes? Come, say! I warn you that I don't belong to the regiment of simpletons. Ah, come now, are you brats from the Pope's establishment?"

A little roughness is good in cases of fear. It is reassuring. The two children drew close to Gavroche.

Gavroche, paternally touched by this confidence, passed from grave to gentle, and addressing the smaller:—

"Stupid," said he, accenting the insulting word, with a caressing intonation, "it's outside that it is black. Outside it's raining, here it does not rain; outside it's cold, here there's not an atom of wind; outside there are heaps of people, here there's no one; outside there ain't even the moon, here there's my candle, confound it!"

The two children began to look upon the apartment with less terror; but Gavroche allowed them no more time for contemplation.

"Quick," said he.

And he pushed them towards what we are very glad to be able to call the end of the room.

There stood his bed.

Gavroche's bed was complete; that is to say, it had a mattress, a blanket, and an alcove with curtains.

The mattress was a straw mat, the blanket a rather large strip of gray woollen stuff, very warm and almost new. This is what the alcove consisted of:—

Three rather long poles, thrust into and consolidated with the rubbish which formed the floor, that is to say, the belly of the elephant, two in front and one behind, and united by a rope at their summits, so as to form a pyramidal bundle. This cluster supported a trellis-work of brass wire which was simply placed upon it, but artistically applied, and held by fastenings of iron wire, so that it enveloped all three poles. A row of very heavy stones kept this network down to the floor so that nothing could pass under it. This grating was nothing else than a piece of the brass screens with which aviaries are covered in menageries. Gavroche's bed stood as in a cage, behind this net. The whole resembled an Esquimaux tent.

This trellis-work took the place of curtains.

Gavroche moved aside the stones which fastened the net down in front, and the two folds of the net which lapped over each other fell apart.

"Down on all fours, brats!" said Gavroche.

He made his guests enter the cage with great precaution, then he crawled in after them, pulled the stones together, and closed the opening hermetically again.

All three had stretched out on the mat. Gavroche still had the *cellar rat* in his hand.

"Now," said he, "go to sleep! I'm going to suppress the candelabra."

"Monsieur," the elder of the brothers asked Gavroche, pointing to the netting, "what's that for?"

"That," answered Gavroche gravely, "is for the rats. Go to sleep!"

Nevertheless, he felt obliged to add a few words of instruction for the benefit of these young creatures, and he continued:—

"It's a thing from the Jardin des Plantes. It's used for fierce animals. There's a whole shopful of them there. All you've got to do is to climb over a wall, crawl through a window, and pass through a door. You can get as much as you want."

As he spoke, he wrapped the younger one up bodily in a fold of the blanket, and the little one murmured:—

"Oh! how good that is! It's warm!"

Gavroche cast a pleased eye on the blanket.

"That's from the Jardin des Plantes, too," said he. "I took that from the monkeys."

And, pointing out to the eldest the mat on which he was lying, a very thick and admirably made mat, he added:—

"That belonged to the giraffe."

After a pause he went on:—

"The beasts had all these things. I took them away from them. It didn't trouble them. I told them: 'It's for the elephant.'"

He paused, and then resumed:—

"You crawl over the walls and you don't care a straw for the government. So there now!"

The two children gazed with timid and stupefied respect on this intrepid and ingenious being, a vagabond like themselves, isolated like themselves, frail like themselves, who had something admirable and all-powerful about him, who seemed supernatural to them, and whose physiognomy was composed of all the grimaces of an old mountebank, mingled with the most ingenuous and charming smiles.

"Monsieur," ventured the elder timidly, "you are not afraid of the police, then?"

Gavroche contented himself with replying:—

"Brat! Nobody says 'police,' they say 'bobbies.'"

The smaller had his eyes wide open, but he said nothing. As he was on the edge of the mat, the elder being in the middle, Gavroche tucked the blanket round him as a mother might have done, and heightened the mat under his head with old rags, in such a way as to form a pillow for the child. Then he turned to the elder:—

"Hey? We're jolly comfortable here, ain't we?"

"Ah, yes!" replied the elder, gazing at Gavroche with the expression of a saved angel.

The two poor little children who had been soaked through, began to grow warm once more.

"Ah, by the way," continued Gavroche, "what were you bawling about?"

And pointing out the little one to his brother:—

"A mite like that, I've nothing to say about, but the idea of a big fellow like you crying! It's idiotic; you looked like a calf."

"Gracious," replied the child, "we have no lodging."

"Bother!" retorted Gavroche, "you don't say 'lodgings,' you say 'crib.'"

"And then, we were afraid of being alone like that at night."

"You don't say 'night,' you say 'darkmans.'"

"Thank you, sir," said the child.

"Listen," went on Gavroche, "you must never bawl again over anything. I'll take care of you. You shall see what fun we'll have. In summer, we'll go to the Glacière with Navet, one of my pals, we'll bathe in the Gare, we'll run stark naked in front of the rafts on the bridge of Austerlitz,—that makes the laundresses raging. They scream, they get mad, and if you only knew how ridiculous they are! We'll go and see the man-skeleton. And then I'll take you to the play. I'll take you to see Frédérick Lemaître. I have tickets, I know some of the actors, I even played in a piece once. There were a lot of us fellers, and we ran under a cloth, and that made the sea. I'll get you an engagement at my theatre. We'll go to see the savages. They ain't real, those savages ain't. They wear pink tights that go all in wrinkles, and you can see where their elbows have been darned with white. Then, we'll go to the Opera. We'll get in with the hired applauders. The Opera claque is well managed. I wouldn't associate with the claque on the boulevard. At the Opera, just fancy! some of them pay twenty sous, but they're ninnies. They're called dishclouts. And then we'll go to see the guillotine work. I'll show you the executioner. He lives in the Rue des Marais. Monsieur Sanson. He has a letter-box at his door. Ah! we'll have famous fun!"

At that moment a drop of wax fell on Gavroche's finger, and recalled him to the realities of life.

"The deuce!" said he, "there's the wick giving out. Attention! I can't spend more than a sou a month on my lighting. When a body goes to bed, he must sleep. We haven't the time

to read M. Paul de Kock's romances. And besides, the light might pass through the cracks of the porte-côchère, and all the bobbies need to do is to see it."

"And then," remarked the elder timidly, — he alone dared talk to Gavroche, and reply to him, "a spark might fall in the straw, and we must look out and not burn the house down."

"People don't say 'burn the house down,' " remarked Gavroche, "they say 'blaze the crib.' "

The storm increased in violence, and the heavy downpour beat upon the back of the colossus amid claps of thunder. "You're taken in, rain!" said Gavroche. "It amuses me to hear the decanter run down the legs of the house. Winter is a stupid; it wastes its merchandise, it loses its labor, it can't wet us, and that makes it kick up a row, old water-carrier that it is."

This allusion to the thunder, all the consequences of which Gavroche, in his character of a philosopher of the nineteenth century, accepted, was followed by a broad flash of lightning, so dazzling that a hint of it entered the belly of the elephant through the crack. Almost at the same instant, the thunder rumbled with great fury. The two little creatures uttered a shriek, and started up so eagerly that the network came near being displaced, but Gavroche turned his bold face to them, and took advantage of the clap of thunder to burst into a laugh.

"Calm down, children. Don't topple over the edifice. That's fine, first-class thunder; all right. That's no slouch of a streak of lightning. Bravo for the good God! Deuce take it! It's almost as good as it is at the Ambigu."

That said, he restored order in the netting, pushed the two children gently down on the bed, pressed their knees, in order to stretch them out at full length, and exclaimed: —

"Since the good God is lighting his candle, I can blow out mine. Now, babes, now, my young humans, you must shut your peepers. It's very bad not to sleep. It'll make you swallow the strainer, or, as they say in fashionable society, stink in the gullet. Wrap yourself up well in the hide! I'm going to put out the light. Are you ready?"

"Yes," murmured the elder, "I'm all right. I seem to have feathers under my head."

"People don't say 'head,' " cried Gavroche, "they say 'nut.' "

The two children nestled close to each other, Gavroche finished arranging them on the mat, drew the blanket up to their very ears, then repeated, for the third time, his injunction in the hieratical tongue: —

"Shut your peepers!"

And he snuffed out his tiny light.

Hardly had the light been extinguished, when a peculiar trembling began to affect the netting under which the three children lay.

It consisted of a multitude of dull scratches which produced a metallic sound, as if claws and teeth were gnawing at the copper wire. This was accompanied by all sorts of little piercing cries.

The little five-year-old boy, on hearing this hubbub overhead, and chilled with terror, jogged his brother's elbow; but the elder brother had already shut his peepers, as Gavroche had ordered. Then the little one, who could no longer control his terror, questioned Gavroche, but in a very low tone, and with bated breath: —

"Sir?"

"Hey?" said Gavroche, who had just closed his eyes.

"What is that?"

"It's the rats," replied Gavroche.

And he laid his head down on the mat again.

The rats, in fact, who swarmed by thousands in the carcass of the elephant, and who were the living black spots which we have already mentioned, had been held in awe by the flame of the candle, so long as it had been lighted; but as soon as the cavern, which was the same as their city, had returned to darkness, scenting what the good story-teller Perrault calls "fresh meat," they had hurled themselves in throngs on Gavroche's tent, had climbed to the top of it, and had begun to bite the meshes as though seeking to pierce this new-fangled trap.

Still the little one could not sleep.

"Sir?" he began again.

"Hey?" said Gavroche.

"What are rats?"

"They are mice."

This explanation reassured the child a little. He had seen white mice in the course of his life, and he was not afraid of them. Nevertheless, he lifted up his voice once more.

"Sir?"

"Hey?" said Gavroche again.

"Why don't you have a cat?"

"I did have one," replied Gavroche, "I brought one here, but they ate her."

This second explanation undid the work of the first, and the little fellow began to tremble again.

The dialogue between him and Gavroche began again for the fourth time :—

“ Monsieur? ”

“ Hey? ”

“ Who was it that was eaten? ”

“ The cat. ”

“ And who ate the cat? ”

“ The rats. ”

“ The mice? ”

“ Yes, the rats. ”

The child, in consternation, dismayed at the thought of mice which ate cats, pursued :—

“ Sir, would those mice eat us? ”

“ Wouldn't they just! ” ejaculated Gavroche.

The child's terror had reached its climax. But Gavroche added :—

“ Don't be afraid. They can't get in. And besides, I'm here! Here, catch hold of my hand. Hold your tongue and shut your peepers! ”

At the same time Gavroche grasped the little fellow's hand across his brother. The child pressed the hand close to him, and felt reassured. Courage and strength have these mysterious ways of communicating themselves. Silence reigned round them once more, the sound of their voices had frightened off the rats; at the expiration of a few minutes, they came raging back, but in vain, the three little fellows were fast asleep and heard nothing more.

The hours of the night fled away. Darkness covered the vast Place de la Bastille. A wintry gale, which mingled with the rain, blew in gusts, the patrol searched all the doorways, alleys, enclosures, and obscure nooks, and in their search for nocturnal vagabonds, they passed in silence before the elephant; the monster, erect, motionless, staring open-eyed into the shadows, had the appearance of dreaming happily over his good deed; and sheltered from heaven and from men the three poor sleeping children.

In order to understand what is about to follow, the reader must remember, that, at that epoch, the Bastille guard-house was situated at the other end of the square, and that what took place in the vicinity of the elephant could neither be seen nor heard by the sentinel.

Towards the end of that hour which immediately precedes the dawn, a man turned from the Rue Saint-Antoine at a run, made the circuit of the enclosure of the column of July, and

glided between the palings until he was underneath the belly of the elephant. If any light had illuminated that man, it might have been divined from the thorough manner in which he was soaked, that he had passed the night in the rain. Arrived beneath the elephant, he uttered a peculiar cry, which did not belong to any human tongue, and which a paroquet alone could have imitated. Twice he repeated this cry, of whose orthography the following barely conveys an idea:—

“Kirikikiou!”

At the second cry, a clear, young, merry voice responded from the belly of the elephant:—

“Yes!”

Almost immediately, the plank which closed the hole was drawn aside, and gave passage to a child who descended the elephant's leg, and fell briskly near the man. It was Gavroche. The man was Montparnasse.

As for his cry of *Kirikikiou*,—that was, doubtless, what the child had meant, when he said:—

“You will ask for Monsieur Gavroche.”

On hearing it, he had waked with a start, had crawled out of his “alcove,” pushing apart the netting a little, and carefully drawing it together again, then he had opened the trap, and descended.

The man and the child recognized each other silently amid the gloom: Montparnasse confined himself to the remark:—

“We need you. Come, lend us a hand.”

The lad asked for no further enlightenment.

“I'm with you,” said he.

And both took their way towards the Rue Saint-Antoine, whence Montparnasse had emerged, winding rapidly through the long file of market-gardeners' carts which descend towards the markets at that hour.

The market-gardeners, crouching, half-asleep, in their wagons, amid the salads and vegetables, enveloped to their very eyes in their mufflers on account of the beating rain, did not even glance at these strange pedestrians.

III. — THE VICISSITUDES OF FLIGHT.

THIS is what had taken place that same night at the La Force:—

An escape had been planned between Babet, Brujon, Guelesmer, and Thénardier, although Thénardier was in close confinement. Babet had arranged the matter for his own benefit, on

the same day, as the reader has seen from Montparnasse's account to Gavroche. Montparnasse was to help them from outside.

Brujon, after having passed a month in the punishment cell, had had time, in the first place, to weave a rope, in the second, to mature a plan. In former times, those severe places where the discipline of the prison delivers the convict into his own hands, were composed of four stone walls, a stone ceiling, a flagged pavement, a camp bed, a grated window, and a door lined with iron, and were called *dungeons*; but the dungeon was judged to be too terrible; nowadays they are composed of an iron door, a grated window, a camp bed, a flagged pavement, four stone walls, and a stone ceiling, and are called *chambers of punishment*. A little light penetrates towards mid-day. The inconvenient point about these chambers which, as the reader sees, are not dungeons, is that they allow the persons who should be at work to think.

So Brujon meditated, and he emerged from the chamber of punishment with a rope. As he had the name of being very dangerous in the Charlemagne courtyard, he was placed in the New Building. The first thing he found in the New Building was Guelemer, the second was a nail; Guelemer, that is to say, crime; a nail, that is to say, liberty. Brujon, of whom it is high time that the reader should have a complete idea, was, with an appearance of delicate health and a profoundly premeditated languor, a polished, intelligent sprig, and a thief, who had a caressing glance, and an atrocious smile. His glance resulted from his will, and his smile from his nature. His first studies in his art had been directed to roofs. He had made great progress in the industry of the men who tear off lead, who plunder the roofs and despoil the gutters by the process called *double pickings*.

The circumstance which put the finishing touch on the moment peculiarly favorable for an attempt at escape, was that the roofers were re-laying and re-jointing, at that very moment, a portion of the slates on the prison. The Saint-Bernard courtyard was no longer absolutely isolated from the Charlemagne and the Saint-Louis courts. Up above there were scaffoldings and ladders; in other words, bridges and stairs in the direction of liberty.

The New Building, which was the most cracked and decrepit thing to be seen anywhere in the world, was the weak point in the prison. The walls were eaten by saltpetre to such an extent that the authorities had been obliged to line the vaults of

the dormitories with a sheathing of wood, because stones were in the habit of becoming detached and falling on the prisoners in their beds. In spite of this antiquity, the authorities committed the error of confining in the New Building the most troublesome prisoners, of placing there "the hard cases," as they say in prison parlance.

The New Building contained four dormitories, one above the other, and a top story which was called the *Bel-Air* (Fine-Air). A large chimney-flue, probably from some ancient kitchen of the Dukes de la Force, started from the ground-floor, traversed all four stories, cut the dormitories, where it figured as a flattened pillar, into two portions, and finally pierced the roof.

Guelemer and Brujon were in the same dormitory. They had been placed, by way of precaution, on the lower story. Chance ordained that the heads of their beds should rest against the chimney.

Thénardier was directly over their heads in the top story known as *Fine-Air*. The pedestrian who halts on the *Rue Culture-Sainte-Catherine*, after passing the barracks of the firemen, in front of the *porte-cochère* of the bathing establishment, beholds a yard full of flowers and shrubs in wooden boxes, at the extremity of which spreads out a little white rotunda with two wings, brightened up with green shutters, the bucolic dream of Jean Jacques.

Not more than ten years ago, there rose above that rotunda an enormous black, hideous, bare wall by which it was backed up.

This was the outer wall of *La Force*.

This wall, beside that rotunda, was Milton viewed through Berquin.

Lofty as it was, this wall was overtopped by a still blacker roof, which could be seen beyond. This was the roof of the New Building. There one could descry four dormer-windows, guarded with bars; they were the windows of the *Fine-Air*.

A chimney pierced the roof; this was the chimney which traversed the dormitories.

The *Bel-Air*, that top story of the New Building, was a sort of large hall, with a Mansard roof, guarded with triple gratings and double doors of sheet iron, which were studded with enormous bolts. When one entered from the north end, one had on one's left the four dormer-windows, on one's right, facing the windows, at regular intervals, four square, tolerably vast cages, separated by narrow passages, built of masonry to about the height of the elbow, and the rest, up to the roof, of iron bars.

Thénardier had been in solitary confinement in one of these cages since the night of the 3d of February. No one was ever able to discover how, and by what connivance, he succeeded in procuring, and secreting a bottle of wine, invented, so it is said, by Desrués, with which a narcotic is mixed, and which the band of the *Endormeurs*, or *Sleep-compellers*, rendered famous.

There are, in many prisons, treacherous employees, half-jailers, half-thieves, who assist in escapes, who sell to the police an unfaithful service, and who turn a penny whenever they can.

On that same night, then, when Little Gavroche picked up the two lost children, Brujon and Guelemer, who knew that Babet, who had escaped that morning, was waiting for them in the street as well as Montparnasse, rose softly, and with the nail which Brujon had found, began to pierce the chimney against which their beds stood. The rubbish fell on Brujon's bed, so that they were not heard. Showers mingled with thunder shook the doors on their hinges, and created in the prison a terrible and opportune uproar. Those of the prisoners who woke, pretended to fall asleep again, and left Guelemer and Brujon to their own devices. Brujon was adroit; Guelemer was vigorous. Before any sound had reached the watcher, who was sleeping in the grated cell which opened into the dormitory, the wall had been pierced, the chimney scaled, the iron grating which barred the upper orifice of the flue forced, and the two redoubtable ruffians were on the roof. The wind and rain redoubled, the roof was slippery.

"What a good night to leg it!" said Brujon.

An abyss six feet broad and eighty feet deep separated them from the surrounding wall. At the bottom of this abyss, they could see the musket of a sentinel gleaming through the gloom. They fastened one end of the rope which Brujon had spun in his dungeon to the stumps of the iron bars which they had just wrenched off, flung the other over the outer wall, crossed the abyss at one bound, clung to the coping of the wall, got astride of it, let themselves slip, one after the other, along the rope, upon a little roof which touches the bath-house, pulled their rope after them, jumped down into the courtyard of the bath-house, traversed it, pushed open the porter's wicket, beside which hung his rope, pulled this, opened the porte-cochère, and found themselves in the street.

Three-quarters of an hour had not elapsed since they had risen in bed in the dark, nail in hand, and their project in their heads.

A few moments later they had joined Babet and Montparnasse, who were prowling about the neighborhood.

They had broken their rope in pulling it after them, and a bit of it remained attached to the chimney on the roof. They had sustained no other damage, however, than that of scratching nearly all the skin off their hands.

That night, Thénardier was warned, without any one being able to explain how, and was not asleep.

Towards one o'clock in the morning, the night being very dark, he saw two shadows pass along the roof, in the rain and squalls, in front of the dormer-window which was opposite his cage. One halted at the window, long enough to dart in a glance. This was Brujon.

Thénardier recognized him, and understood. This was enough.

Thénardier, rated as a burglar, and detained as a measure of precaution under the charge of organizing a nocturnal ambush, with armed force, was kept in sight. The sentry, who was relieved every two hours, marched up and down in front of his cage with loaded musket. The Fine-Air was lighted by a skylight. The prisoner had on his feet fetters weighing fifty pounds. Every day, at four o'clock in the afternoon, a jailer, escorted by two dogs, — this was still in vogue at that time, — entered his cage, deposited beside his bed a loaf of black bread, weighing two pounds, a jug of water, a bowl filled with rather thin bouillon, in which swam a few Mayagan beans, inspected his irons and tapped the bars. This man and his dogs made two visits during the night.

Thénardier had obtained permission to keep a sort of iron bolt which he used to spike his bread into a crack in the wall, "in order to preserve it from the rats," as he said. As Thénardier was kept in sight, no objection had been made to this spike. Still, it was remembered afterwards, that one of the jailers had said: "It would be better to let him have only a wooden spike."

At two o'clock in the morning, the sentinel, who was an old soldier, was relieved, and replaced by a conscript. A few moments later, the man with the dogs paid his visit, and went off without noticing anything, except, possibly, the excessive youth and "the rustic air" of the "raw recruit." Two hours afterwards, at four o'clock, when they came to relieve the conscript, he was found asleep on the floor, lying like a log near Thénardier's cage. As for Thénardier, he was no longer there. There was a hole in the ceiling of his cage, and, above it, another hole

in the roof. One of the planks of his bed had been wrenched off, and probably carried away with him, as it was not found. They also seized in his cell a half-empty bottle which contained the remains of the stupefying wine with which the soldier had been drugged. The soldier's bayonet had disappeared.

At the moment when this discovery was made, it was assumed that Thénardier was out of reach. The truth is, that he was no longer in the New Building, but that he was still in great danger.

Thénardier, on reaching the roof of the New Building, had found the remains of Brujon's rope hanging to the bars of the upper trap of the chimney, but, as this broken fragment was much too short, he had not been able to escape by the outer wall, as Brujon and Guelemer had done.

When one turns from the Rue des Ballets into the Rue du Roi-de-Sicile, one almost immediately encounters a repulsive ruin. There stood on that spot, in the last century, a house of which only the back wall now remains, a regular wall of masonry, which rises to the height of the third story between the adjoining buildings. This ruin can be recognized by two large square windows which are still to be seen there; the middle one, that nearest the right gable, is barred with a worm-eaten beam adjusted like a prop. Through these windows there was formerly visible a lofty and lugubrious wall, which was a fragment of the outer wall of La Force.

The empty space on the street left by the demolished house is half-filled by a fence of rotten boards, shored up by five stone posts. In this recess lies concealed a little shanty which leans against the portion of the ruin which has remained standing. The fence has a gate, which, a few years ago, was fastened only by a latch.

It was the crest of this ruin that Thénardier had succeeded in reaching, a little after one o'clock in the morning.

How had he got there? That is what no one has ever been able to explain or understand. The lightning must, at the same time, have hindered and helped him. Had he made use of the ladders and scaffoldings of the slaters to get from roof to roof, from enclosure to enclosure, from compartment to compartment, to the buildings of the Charlemagne court, then to the buildings of the Saint-Louis court, to the outer wall, and thence to the hut on the Rue du Roi-de-Sicile? But in that itinerary there existed breaks which seemed to render it an impossibility. Had he placed the plank from his bed like a bridge from the roof of the Fine-Air to the outer wall, and crawled flat on his

belly on the coping of the outer wall the whole distance round the prison as far as the hut? But the outer wall of La Force formed a crenellated and unequal line; it mounted and descended, it dropped at the firemen's barracks, it rose towards the bath-house, it was cut in twain by buildings, it was not even of the same height on the Hotel Lamoignon as on the Rue Pavée; everywhere occurred falls and right angles; and then, the sentinels must have espied the dark form of the fugitive; hence, the route taken by Thénardier still remains rather inexplicable. In two manners, flight was impossible. Had Thénardier, spurred on by that thirst for liberty which changes precipices into ditches, iron bars into wattles of osier, a legless man into an athlete, a gouty man into a bird, stupidity into instinct, instinct into intelligence, and intelligence into genius, had Thénardier invented a third mode? No one has ever found out.

The marvels of escape cannot always be accounted for. The man who makes his escape, we repeat, is inspired; there is something of the star and of the lightning in the mysterious gleam of flight; the effort towards deliverance is no less surprising than the flight towards the sublime, and one says of the escaped thief: "How did he contrive to scale that wall?" in the same way that one says of Corneille: "Where did he find *the means of dying?*"

At all events, dripping with perspiration, drenched with rain, with his clothes hanging in ribbons, his hands flayed, his elbows bleeding, his knees torn, Thénardier had reached what children, in their figurative language, call *the edge* of the wall of the ruin, there he had stretched himself out at full length, and there his strength had failed him. A steep escarpment three stories high separated him from the pavement of the street.

The rope which he had was too short.

There he waited, pale, exhausted, desperate with all the despair which he had undergone, still hidden by the night, but telling himself that the day was on the point of dawning, alarmed at the idea of hearing the neighboring clock of Saint-Paul strike four within a few minutes, an hour when the sentinel was relieved and when the latter would be found asleep under the pierced roof, staring in horror at a terrible depth, at the light of the street lanterns, the wet, black pavement, that pavement longed for yet frightful, which meant death, and which meant liberty.

He asked himself whether his three accomplices in flight had succeeded, if they had heard him, and if they would come

to his assistance. He listened. With the exception of the patrol, no one had passed through the street since he had been there. Nearly the whole of the descent of the market-gardeners from Montreuil, from Charonne, from Vincennes, and from Bercy to the markets was accomplished through the Rue Saint-Antoine.

Four o'clock struck. Thénardier shuddered. A few moments later, that terrified and confused uproar which follows the discovery of an escape broke forth in the prison. The sound of doors opening and shutting, the creaking of gratings on their hinges, a tumult in the guard-house, the hoarse shouts of the turnkeys, the shock of musket-butto on the pavement of the courts, reached his ears. Lights ascended and descended past the grated windows of the dormitories, a torch ran along the ridge-pole of the top story of the New Building, the firemen belonging in the barracks on the right had been summoned. Their helmets, which the torch lighted up in the rain, went and came along the roofs. At the same time, Thénardier perceived in the direction of the Bastille a wan whiteness lighting up the edge of the sky in doleful wise.

He was on top of a wall ten inches wide, stretched out under the heavy rain, with two gulfs to right and left, unable to stir, subject to the giddiness of a possible fall, and to the horror of a certain arrest, and his thoughts, like the pendulum of a clock, swung from one of these ideas to the other: "Dead if I fall, caught if I stay." In the midst of this anguish, he suddenly saw, the street being still dark, a man who was gliding along the walls and coming from the Rue Pavée, halt in the recess above which Thénardier was, as it were, suspended. Here this man was joined by a second who walked with the same caution, then by a third, then by a fourth. When these men were reunited, one of them lifted the latch of the gate in the fence, and all four entered the enclosure in which the shanty stood. They halted directly under Thénardier. These men had evidently chosen this vacant space in order that they might consult without being seen by the passers-by or by the sentinel who guards the wicket of La Force a few paces distant. It must be added, that the rain kept this sentinel blocked in his box. Thénardier, not being able to distinguish their visages, lent an ear to their words with the desperate attention of a wretch who feels himself lost.

Thénardier saw something resembling a gleam of hope flash before his eyes, — these men conversed in slang.

The first said in a low but distinct voice: —

“Let’s cut. What are we up to here?”

The second replied: “It’s raining hard enough to put out the very devil’s fire. And the bobbies will be along instanter. There’s a soldier on guard yonder. We shall get nabbed here.”

These two words, *icigo* and *icicaille*, both of which mean *ici*, and which belong, the first to the slang of the barriers, the second to the slang of the Temple, were flashes of light for Thénardier. By the *icigo* he recognized Brujon, who was a prowler of the barriers, by the *icicaille* he knew Babet, who, among his other trades, had been an old-clothes broker at the Temple.

The antique slang of the great century is no longer spoken except in the Temple, and Babet was really the only person who spoke it in all its purity. Had it not been for the *icicaille*, Thénardier would not have recognized him, for he had entirely changed his voice.

In the meanwhile, the third man had intervened.

“There’s no hurry yet, let’s wait a bit. How do we know that he doesn’t stand in need of us?”

By this, which was nothing but French, Thénardier recognized Montparnasse, who made it a point in his elegance to understand all slangs and to speak none of them.

As for the fourth, he held his peace, but his huge shoulders betrayed him. Thénardier did not hesitate. It was Guelemer.

Brujon replied almost impetuously, but still in a low tone:—

“What are you jabbering about? The tavern-keeper hasn’t managed to cut his stick. He don’t tumble to the racket, that he don’t! You have to be a pretty knowing cove to tear up your shirt, cut up your sheet to make a rope, punch holes in doors, get up false papers, make false keys, file your irons, hang out your cord, hide yourself, and disguise yourself! The old fellow hasn’t managed to play it, he doesn’t understand how to work the business.”

Babet added, still in that classical slang which was spoken by Poulailleur and Cartouche, and which is to the bold, new, highly colored and risky argot used by Brujon what the language of Racine is to the language of André Chenier:—

“Your tavern-keeper must have been nabbed in the act. You have to be knowing. He’s only a greenhorn. He must have let himself be taken in by a bobby, perhaps even by a sheep who played it on him as his pal. Listen, Montparnasse, do you hear those shouts in the prison? You have seen all those lights. He’s recaptured, there! He’ll get off with twenty years. I ain’t afraid, I ain’t a coward, but there ain’t anything more to do, or otherwise they’d lead us a dance. Don’t get mad, come with us, let’s go drink a bottle of old wine together.”

"One doesn't desert one's friends in a scrape," grumbled Montparnasse.

"I tell you he's nabbed!" retorted Brujon. "At the present moment, the inn-keeper ain't worth a ha'penny. We can't do nothing for him. Let's be off. Every minute I think a bobby has got me in his fist."

Montparnasse no longer offered more than a feeble resistance; the fact is, that these four men, with the fidelity of ruffians who never abandon each other, had prowled all night long about La Force, great as was their peril, in the hope of seeing Thénardier make his appearance on the top of some wall. But the night, which was really growing too fine,—for the downpour was such as to render all the streets deserted,—the cold which was overpowering them, their soaked garments, their hole-ridden shoes, the alarming noise which had just burst forth in the prison, the hours which had elapsed, the patrol which they had encountered, the hope which was vanishing, all urged them to beat a retreat. Montparnasse himself, who was, perhaps, almost Thénardier's son-in-law, yielded. A moment more, and they would be gone. Thénardier was panting on his wall like the shipwrecked sufferers of the *Méduse* on their raft when they beheld the vessel which had appeared in sight vanish on the horizon.

He dared not call to them; a cry might be heard and ruin everything. An idea occurred to him, a last idea, a flash of inspiration; he drew from his pocket the end of Brujon's rope, which he had detached from the chimney of the New Building, and flung it into the space enclosed by the fence. This rope fell at their feet.

"A widow,"¹ said Babet.

"My tortouse!"² said Brujon.

"The tavern-keeper is there," said Montparnasse.

They raised their eyes. Thénardier thrust out his head a very little.

"Quick!" said Montparnasse, "have you the other end of the rope, Brujon?"

"Yes."

"Knot the two pieces together, we'll fling him the rope, he can fasten it to the wall, and he'll have enough of it to get down with."

Thénardier ran the risk, and spoke:—

"I am paralyzed with cold."

"We'll warm you up."

¹ Argot of the Temple.

² Argot of the barriers.

"I can't budge."

"Let yourself slide, we'll catch you."

"My hands are benumbed."

"Only fasten the rope to the wall."

"I can't."

"Then one of us must climb up," said Montparnasse.

"Three stories!" ejaculated Brujon.

An ancient plaster flue, which had served for a stove that had been used in the shanty in former times, ran along the wall and mounted almost to the very spot where they could see Thénardier. This flue, then much damaged and full of cracks, has since fallen, but the marks of it are still visible.

It was very narrow.

"One might get up by the help of that," said Montparnasse.

"By that flue?" exclaimed Babet, "a grown-up cove, never! it would take a brat."

"A brat must be got," resumed Brujon.

"Where are we to find a young 'un?" said Guelemer.

"Wait," said Montparnasse. "I've got the very article."

He opened the gate of the fence very softly, made sure that no one was passing along the street, stepped out cautiously, shut the gate behind him, and set off at a run in the direction of the Bastille.

Seven or eight minutes elapsed, eight thousand centuries to Thénardier; Babet, Brujon, and Guelemer did not open their lips; at last the gate opened once more, and Montparnasse appeared, breathless, and followed by Gavroche. The rain still rendered the street completely deserted.

Little Gavroche entered the enclosure and gazed at the forms of these ruffians with a tranquil air. The water was dripping from his hair. Guelemer addressed him:—

"Are you a man, young 'un?"

Gavroche shrugged his shoulders, and replied:—

"A young 'un like me's a man, and men like you are babes."

"The brat's tongue's well hung!" exclaimed Babet.

"The Paris brat ain't made of straw," added Brujon.

"What do you want?" asked Gavroche.

Montparnasse answered:—

"Climb up that flue."

"With this rope," said Babet.

"And fasten it," continued Brujon.

"To the top of the wall," went on Babet.

"To the cross-bar of the window," added Brujon.

"And then?" said Gavroche.

"There!" said Guelemer.

The gamin examined the rope, the flue, the wall, the windows, and made that indescribable and disdainful noise with his lips which signifies:—

"Is that all!"

"There's a man up there whom you are to save," resumed Montparnasse.

"Will you?" began Brujon again.

"Greenhorn!" replied the lad, as though the question appeared a most unprecedented one to him.

And he took off his shoes.

Guelemer seized Gavroche by one arm, set him on the roof of the shanty, whose worm-eaten planks bent beneath the urchin's weight, and handed him the rope which Brujon had knotted together during Montparnasse's absence. The gamin directed his steps towards the flue, which it was easy to enter, thanks to a large crack which touched the roof. At the moment when he was on the point of ascending, Thénardier, who saw life and safety approaching, bent over the edge of the wall; the first light of dawn struck white upon his brow dripping with sweat, upon his livid cheek-bones, his sharp and savage nose, his bristling gray beard, and Gavroche recognized him.

"Hullo! it's my father! Oh! that won't hinder."

And taking the rope in his teeth, he resolutely began the ascent.

He reached the summit of the hut, bestrode the old wall as though it had been a horse, and knotted the rope firmly to the upper cross-bar of the window.

A moment later, Thénardier was in the street.

As soon as he touched the pavement, as soon as he found himself out of danger, he was no longer either weary, or chilled or trembling; the terrible things from which he had escaped vanished like smoke, all that strange and ferocious mind awoke once more, and stood erect and free, ready to march onward.

These were this man's first words:—

"Now, whom are we to eat?"

It is useless to explain the sense of this frightfully transparent remark, which signifies both to kill, to assassinate, and to plunder. *To eat*, true sense: *to devour*.

"Let's get well into a corner," said Brujon. "Let's settle it in three words, and part at once. There was an affair that promised well in the Rue Plumet, a deserted street, an isolated house, an old rotten gate on a garden, and lone women."

"Well! why not?" demanded Thénardier.

"Your girl, Éponine, went to see about the matter," replied Babet.

"And she brought a biscuit to Magnon," added Guelemer. "Nothing to be made there."

"The girl's no fool," said Thénardier. "Still, it must be seen to."

"Yes, yes," said Brujon, "it must be looked up."

In the meanwhile, none of the men seemed to see Gavroche, who, during this colloquy, had seated himself on one of the fence-posts; he waited a few moments, thinking that perhaps his father would turn towards him, then he put on his shoes again, and said:—

"Is that all? You don't want me any more, my men? Now you're out of your scrape. I'm off. I must go and get my brats out of bed."

And off he went.

The five men emerged, one after another, from the enclosure.

When Gavroche had disappeared at the corner of the Rue des Ballets, Babet took Thénardier aside.

"Did you take a good look at that young 'un?" he asked.

"What young 'un?"

"The one who climbed the wall and carried you the rope."

"Not particularly."

"Well, I don't know, but it strikes me that it was your son."

"Bah!" said Thénardier, "do you think so?"



BOOK SEVENTH. — SLANG.

I. — ORIGIN.

Pigritia is a terrible word.

It engenders a whole world, *la pègre*, for which read *theft*, and a hell, *la pégrenne*, for which read *hunger*.

Thus, idleness is the mother.

She has a son, theft, and a daughter, hunger.

Where are we at this moment? In the land of slang.

What is slang? It is at one and the same time, a nation and a dialect; it is theft in its two kinds; people and language.

When, four and thirty years ago, the narrator of this grave and sombre history introduced into a work written with the same aim as this ¹ a thief who talked argot, there arose amazement

¹ The Last Day of a Condemned Man.

and clamor. — “What! How! Argot! Why, argot is horrible! It is the language of prisons, galleys, convicts, of everything that is most abominable in society!” etc., etc.

We have never understood this sort of objections.

Since that time, two powerful romancers, one of whom is a profound observer of the human heart, the other an intrepid friend of the people, Balzac and Eugène Sue, having represented their ruffians as talking their natural language, as the author of *The Last Day of a Condemned Man* did in 1828, the same objections have been raised. People repeated: “What do authors mean by that revolting dialect? Slang is odious! Slang makes one shudder!”

Who denies that? Of course it does.

When it is a question of probing a wound, a gulf, a society, since when has it been considered wrong to go too far? to go to the bottom? We have always thought that it was sometimes a courageous act, and, at least, a simple and useful deed, worthy of the sympathetic attention which duty accepted and fulfilled merits. Why should one not explore everything, and study everything? why should one halt on the way? The halt is a matter depending on the sounding-line, and not on the leadsmen.

Certainly, too, it is neither an attractive nor an easy task to undertake an investigation into the lowest depths of the social order, where terra firma comes to an end and where mud begins, to rummage in those vague, murky waves, to follow up, to seize and to fling, still quivering, upon the pavement that abject dialect which is dripping with filth when thus brought to the light, that pustulous vocabulary each word of which seems an unclean ring from a monster of the mire and the shadows. Nothing is more lugubrious than the contemplation thus in its nudity, in the broad light of thought, of the horrible swarming of slang. It seems, in fact, to be a sort of horrible beast made for the night which has just been torn from its cesspool. One thinks one beholds a frightful, living, and bristling thicket which quivers, rustles, wavers, returns to shadow, threatens and glares. One word resembles a claw, another an extinguished and bleeding eye, such and such a phrase seems to move like the claw of a crab. All this is alive with the hideous vitality of things which have been organized out of disorganization.

Now, when has horror ever excluded study? Since when has malady banished medicine? Can one imagine a naturalist refusing to study the viper, the bat, the scorpion, the centipede, the tarantula, and one who would cast them back into their darkness, saying: “Oh! how ugly that is!” The thinker who

should turn aside from slang would resemble a surgeon who should avert his face from an ulcer or a wart. He would be like a philologist refusing to examine a fact in language, a philosopher hesitating to scrutinize a fact in humanity. For, it must be stated to those who are ignorant of the case, that argot is both a literary phenomenon and a social result. What is slang, properly speaking? It is the language of wretchedness.

We may be stopped; the fact may be put to us in general terms, which is one way of attenuating it; we may be told, that all trades, professions, it may be added, all the accidents of the social hierarchy and all forms of intelligence, have their own slang. The merchant who says: "Montpellier not active, Marseilles fine quality," the broker on 'change who says: "Assets at end of current month," the gambler who says: "*Tiers et tout, refait de pique*," the sheriff of the Norman Isles who says: "The holder in fee reverting to his landed estate cannot claim the fruits of that estate during the hereditary seizure of the real estate by the mortgagor," the playwright who says: "The piece was hissed," the comedian who says: "I've made a hit," the philosopher who says: "Phenomenal triplicity," the huntsman who says: "*Voileci allais, Voileci fuyant*," the phrenologist who says: "Amativeness, combativeness, secretiveness," the infantry soldier who says: "My shooting-iron," the cavalry-man who says: "My turkey-cock," the fencing-master who says: "Tierce, quarte, break," the printer who says: "My shooting-stick and galley,"—all, printer, fencing-master, cavalry dragoon, infantry-man, phrenologist, huntsman, philosopher, comedian, playwright, sheriff, gambler, stock-broker, and merchant, speak slang. The painter who says: "My grinder," the notary who says: "My Skip-the-Gutter," the hairdresser who says: "My mealyback," the cobbler who says: "My cub," talk slang. Strictly speaking, if one absolutely insists on the point, all the different fashions of saying the right and the left, the sailor's *port* and *starboard*, the scene-shifter's *court-side*, and *garden-side*, the beadle's *Gospel-side* and *Epistle-side*, are slang. There is the slang of the affected lady as well as of the *précieuses*. The Hotel Rambouillet nearly adjoins the Cour des Miracles. There is a slang of duchesses, witness this phrase contained in a love-letter from a very great lady and a very pretty woman of the Restoration: "You will find in this gossip a fultitude of reasons why I should libertize."¹ Diplomatic ciphers are slang; the pontifical chan-

¹ "Vous trouverez dans ces potains-là, une foulditude de raisons pour que je me libertise."

cellery by using 26 for Rome, *grkztntgzyal* for despatch, and *abfxustgrnogrkzu tu XI* for the Duc de Modena, speaks slang. The physicians of the Middle Ages who, for carrot, radish, and turnip, said *Opoponach*, *perfroshinum*, *reptitalmus*, *dracatholicum*, *angelorum*, *postmegorum*, talked slang. The sugar-manufacturer who says: "Loaf, clarified, lumps, bastard, common, burnt," — this honest manufacturer talks slang. A certain school of criticism twenty years ago, which used to say: "Half of the works of Shakespeare consists of plays upon words and puns," — talked slang. The poet, and the artist who, with profound understanding, would designate M. de Montmorency as "a bourgeois," if he were not a judge of verses and statues, speak slang. The classic Academician who calls flowers "Flora," fruits, "Pomona," the sea, "Neptune," love, "fires," beauty, "charms," a horse, "a courser," the white or tri-colored cockade, "the rose of Bellona," the three-cornered hat, "Mars' triangle," — that classical Academician talks slang. Algebra, medicine, botany, have each their slang. The tongue which is employed on board ship, that wonderful language of the sea, which is so complete and so picturesque, which was spoken by Jean Bart, Duquesne, Suffren, and Duperré, which mingles with the whistling of the rigging, the sound of the speaking-trumpets, the shock of the boarding-irons, the roll of the sea, the wind, the gale, the cannon, is wholly a heroic and dazzling slang, which is to the fierce slang of the thieves what the lion is to the jackal.

No doubt. But say what we will, this manner of understanding the word *slang* is an extension which every one will not admit. For our part, we reserve to the word its ancient and precise, circumscribed and determined significance, and we restrict slang to slang. The veritable slang and the slang that is pre-eminently slang, if the two words can be coupled thus, the slang immemorial which was a kingdom, is nothing else, we repeat, than the homely, uneasy, crafty, treacherous, venomous, cruel, equivocal, vile, profound, fatal tongue of wretchedness. There exists, at the extremity of all abasement and all misfortunes, a last misery which revolts and makes up its mind to enter into conflict with the whole mass of fortunate facts and reigning rights; a fearful conflict, where, now cunning, now violent, unhealthy and ferocious at one and the same time, it attacks the social order with pin-pricks through vice, and with club-blows through crime. To meet the needs of this conflict, wretchedness has invented a language of combat, which is slang.

To keep afloat and to rescue from oblivion, to hold above the gulf, were it but a fragment of some language which man has spoken and which would, otherwise, be lost, that is to say, one of the elements, good or bad, of which civilization is composed, or by which it is complicated, to extend the records of social observation; is to serve civilization itself. This service Plautus rendered, consciously or unconsciously, by making two Carthaginian soldiers talk Phœnician; that service Molière rendered, by making so many of his characters talk Levantine and all sorts of dialects. Here objections spring up afresh. Phœnician, very good! Levantine, quite right! Even dialect, let that pass! They are tongues which have belonged to nations or provinces; but slang! What is the use of preserving slang? What is the good of assisting slang "to survive"?

To this we reply in one word, only. Assuredly, if the tongue which a nation or a province has spoken is worthy of interest, the language which has been spoken by a misery is still more worthy of attention and study.

It is the language which has been spoken, in France, for example, for more than four centuries, not only by a misery, but by every possible human misery.

And then, we insist upon it, the study of social deformities and infirmities, and the task of pointing them out with a view to remedy, is not a business in which choice is permitted. The historian of manners and ideas has no less austere a mission than the historian of events. The latter has the surface of civilization, the conflicts of crowns, the births of princes, the marriages of kings, battles, assemblages, great public men, revolutions in the daylight, everything on the exterior; the other historian has the interior, the depths, the people who toil, suffer, wait, the oppressed woman, the agonizing child, the secret war between man and man, obscure ferocities, prejudices, plotted iniquities, the subterranean, the indistinct tremors of multitudes, the die-of-hunger, the counter-blows of the law, the secret evolution of souls, the go-bare-foot, the bare-armed, the disinherited, the orphans, the unhappy, and the infamous, all the forms which roam through the darkness. He must descend with his heart full of charity, and severity at the same time, as a brother and as a judge, to those impenetrable case-mates where crawl, pell-mell, those who bleed and those who deal the blow, those who weep and those who curse, those who fast and those who devour, those who endure evil and those who inflict it. Have these historians of hearts and souls duties at all inferior to the historians of external facts? Does any

one think that Alighieri has any fewer things to say than Machiavelli? Is the under side of civilization any less important than the upper side merely because it is deeper and more sombre? Do we really know the mountain well when we are not acquainted with the cavern?

Let us say, moreover, parenthetically, that from a few words of what precedes a marked separation might be inferred between the two classes of historians which does not exist in our mind. No one is a good historian of the patent, visible, striking, and public life of peoples, if he is not, at the same time, in a certain measure, the historian of their deep and hidden life; and no one is a good historian of the interior unless he understands how, at need, to be the historian of the exterior also. The history of manners and ideas permeates the history of events, and this is true reciprocally. They constitute two different orders of facts which correspond to each other, which are always interlaced, and which often bring forth results. All the lineaments which Providence traces on the surface of a nation have their parallels, sombre but distinct, in their depths, and all convulsions of the depths produce ebullitions on the surface. True history being a mixture of all things, the true historian mingles in everything.

Man is not a circle with a single centre; he is an ellipse with a double focus. Facts form one of these, and ideas the other.

Slang is nothing but a dressing-room where the tongue having some bad action to perform, disguises itself. There it clothes itself in word-masks, in metaphor-rags. In this guise it becomes horrible.

One finds it difficult to recognize. Is it really the French tongue, the great human tongue? Behold it ready to step upon the stage and to retort upon crime, and prepared for all the employments of the repertory of evil. It no longer walks, it hobbles; it limps on the crutch of the Court of Miracles, a crutch metamorphosable into a club; it is called vagrancy; every sort of spectre, its dressers, have painted its face, it crawls and rears, the double gait of the reptile. Henceforth, it is apt at all rôles, it is made suspicious by the counterfeiter, covered with verdigris by the forger, blacked by the soot of the incendiary; and the murderer applies its rouge.

When one listens, by the side of honest men, at the portals of society, one overhears the dialogues of those who are on the outside. One distinguishes questions and replies. One perceives, without understanding it, a hideous murmur, sound-

ing almost like human accents, but more nearly resembling a howl than an articulate word. It is slang. The words are misshapen and stamped with an indescribable and fantastic bestiality. One thinks one hears hydras talking.

It is unintelligible in the dark. It gnashes and whispers, completing the gloom with mystery. It is black in misfortune, it is blacker still in crime; these two blacknesses amalgamated, compose slang. Obscurity in the atmosphere, obscurity in acts, obscurity in voices. Terrible, toad-like tongue which goes and comes, leaps, crawls, slobbers, and stirs about in monstrous wise in that immense gray fog composed of rain and night, of hunger, of vice, of falsehood, of injustice, of nudity, of suffocation, and of winter, the high noonday of the miserable.

Let us have compassion on the chastised. Alas! Who are we ourselves? Who am I who now address you? Who are you who are listening to me? And are you very sure that we have done nothing before we were born? The earth is not devoid of resemblance to a jail. Who knows whether man is not a recaptured offender against divine justice? Look closely at life. It is so made, that everywhere we feel the sense of punishment.

Are you what is called a happy man? Well! you are sad every day. Each day has its own great grief or its little care. Yesterday you were trembling for a health that is dear to you, to-day you fear for your own; to-morrow it will be anxiety about money, the day after to-morrow the diatribe of a slanderer, the day after that, the misfortune of some friend; then the prevailing weather, then something that has been broken or lost, then a pleasure with which your conscience and your vertebral column reproach you; again, the course of public affairs. This without reckoning in the pains of the heart. And so it goes on. One cloud is dispelled, another forms. There is hardly one day out of a hundred which is wholly joyous and sunny. And you belong to that small class who are happy! As for the rest of mankind, stagnating night rests upon them.

Thoughtful minds make but little use of the phrase: the fortunate and the unfortunate. In this world, evidently the vestibule of another, there are no fortunate.

The real human division is this: the luminous and the shady. To diminish the number of the shady, to augment the number of the luminous, — that is the object. That is why we cry: Education! science! To teach reading, means to light the fire; every syllable spelled out sparkles.

However, he who says light does not, necessarily, say joy. People suffer in the light; excess burns. The flame is the enemy

of the wing. To burn without ceasing to fly, — therein lies the marvel of genius.

When you shall have learned to know, and to love, you will still suffer. The day is born in tears. The luminous weep, if only over those in darkness.

II. — Roots.

SLANG is the tongue of those that sit in darkness.

Thought is moved in its most sombre depths, social philosophy is bidden to its most poignant meditations, in the presence of that enigmatic dialect at once so blighted and rebellious. Therein lies chastisement made visible. Every syllable has an air of being marked. The words of the vulgar tongue appear therein wrinkled and shrivelled, as it were, beneath the hot iron of the executioner. Some seem to be still smoking. Such and such a phrase produces upon you the effect of the shoulder of a thief branded with the fleur-de-lys, which has suddenly been laid bare. Ideas almost refuse to be expressed in these substantives which are fugitives from justice. Metaphor is sometimes so shameless, that one feels that it has worn the iron neck-fetter.

Moreover, in spite of all this, and because of all this, this strange dialect has by rights, its own compartment in that great impartial case of pigeon-holes where there is room for the rusty farthing as well as for the gold medal, and which is called literature. Slang, whether the public admit the fact or not, has its syntax and its poetry. It is a language. Yes, by the deformity of certain terms, we recognize the fact that it was chewed by Mandrin, and by the splendor of certain metonymies, we feel that Villon spoke it.

That exquisite and celebrated verse—

Mais où sont les neiges d'antan ?

But where are the snows of years gone by ?

is a verse of slang. *Antan* — *ante annum* — is a word of Thunes slang, which signified the past year, and by extension, formerly. Thirty-five years ago, at the epoch of the departure of the great chain-gang, there could be read in one of the cells at Bicêtre, this maxim engraved with a nail on the wall by a king of Thunes condemned to the galleys: *Les dabs d'antan trimaient siempore pour la pierre du Coësre*. This means: *Kings in days gone by always went and had themselves*

anointed. In the opinion of that king, anointment meant the galleys.

The word *décarale*, which expresses the departure of heavy vehicles at a gallop, is attributed to Villon, and it is worthy of him. This word, which strikes fire with all four of its feet, sums up in a masterly onomatopœia the whole of La Fontaine's admirable verse :—

Six forts chevaux tiraient un coche.
Six stout horses drew a coach.

From a purely literary point of view, few studies would prove more curious and fruitful than the study of slang. It is a whole language within a language, a sort of sickly excrescence, an unhealthy graft which has produced a vegetation, a parasite which has its roots in the old Gallic trunk, and whose sinister foliage crawls all over one side of the language. This is what may be called the first, the vulgar aspect of slang. But, for those who study the tongue as it should be studied, that is to say, as geologists study the earth, slang appears like a veritable alluvial deposit. According as one digs a longer or shorter distance into it, one finds in slang, below the old popular French, Provençal, Spanish, Italian, Levantine, that language of the Mediterranean ports, English and German, the Romance language in its three varieties, French, Italian, and Romance Romance, Latin, and finally Basque and Celtic. A profound and unique formation. A subterranean edifice erected in common by all the miserable. Each accursed race has deposited its layer, each suffering has dropped its stone there, each heart has contributed its pebble. A throng of evil, base, or irritated souls, who have traversed life and have vanished into eternity, linger there almost entirely visible still beneath the form of some monstrous word.

Do you want Spanish? The old Gothic slang abounded in it. Here is *boffete*, a box on the ear, which is derived from *bofetón*; *vantane*, window (later on *vanterne*), which comes from *vantana*; *gat*, cat, which comes from *gato*; *acite*, oil, which comes from *aceyte*. Do you want Italian? Here is *spade*, sword, which comes from *spada*; *carvel*, boat, which comes from *caravella*. Do you want English? Here is *bichot*, which comes from *bishop*; *raille*, spy, which comes from *rascal*, *rascalion*; *pilche*, a case, which comes from *pilcher*, a sheath. Do you want German? Here is the *caleur*, the waiter, *kellner*; the *hers*, the master, *herzog* (duke). Do you want Latin? Here is *frangir*, to break, *frangere*; *affurer*, to steal, *fur*; *cadene*, chain, *catena*.

There is one word which crops up in every language of the continent, with a sort of mysterious power and authority. It is the word *magnus*; the Scotchman makes of it his *mac*, which designates the chief of the clan; Mac-Farlane, Mac-Callumore, the great Farlane, the great Callumore¹; slang turns it into *meck* and later *le meg*, that is to say, God. Would you like Basque? Here is *gahisto*, the devil, which comes from *gaiztoa*, evil; *sorgabon*, good night, which comes from *gabon*, good evening. Do you want Celtic? Here is *blavin*, a handkerchief, which comes from *blavet*, gushing water; *ménesse*, a woman (in a bad sense), which comes from *meinec*, full of stones; *barant*, brook, from *baranton*, fountain; *goffeur*, locksmith, from *goff*, blacksmith; *guedouze*, death, which comes from *guenn-du*, black-white. Finally, would you like history? Slang calls crowns *les maltèses*, a souvenir of the coin in circulation on the galleys of Malta.

In addition to the philological origins just indicated, slang possesses other and still more natural roots, which spring, so to speak, from the mind of man itself.

In the first place, the direct creation of words. Therein lies the mystery of tongues. To paint with words, which contains figures one knows not how or why, is the primitive foundation of all human languages, what may be called their granite.

Slang abounds in words of this description, immediate words, words created instantaneously no one knows either where or by whom, without etymology, without analogies, without derivatives, solitary, barbarous, sometimes hideous words, which at times possess a singular power of expression and which live. The executioner, *le taule*; the forest, *le sabri*; fear, flight, *taf*; the lackey, *le larbin*; the mineral, the prefect, the minister, *pharos*; the devil, *le rabouin*. Nothing is stranger than these words which both mask and reveal. Some, *le rabouin*, for example, are at the same time grotesque and terrible, and produce on you the effect of a cyclopean grimace.

In the second place, metaphor. The peculiarity of a language which is desirous of saying all yet concealing all is that it is rich in figures. Metaphor is an enigma, wherein the thief who is plotting a stroke, the prisoner who is arranging an escape, take refuge. No idiom is more metaphorical than slang: *dévisser le coco* (to unscrew the nut), to twist the neck; *tortiller* (to wriggle), to eat; *être gerbé*, to be tried; *a rat*, a bread thief; *il lansquine*, it rains, a striking, ancient figure which partly bears its date about it, which assimilates long oblique lines of

¹ It must be observed, however, that *mac* in Celtic means *son*.

rain, with the dense and slanting pikes of the lancers, and which compresses into a single word the popular expression 'it rains halberds. Sometimes, in proportion as slang progresses from the first epoch to the second, words pass from the primitive and savage sense to the metaphorical sense. The devil ceases to be *le rabouin*, and becomes *le boulanger* (the baker), who puts the bread into the oven. This is more witty, but less grand, something like Racine after Corneille, like Euripides after Æschylus. Certain slang phrases which participate in the two epochs and have at once the barbaric character and the metaphorical character resemble phantasmagories. *Les sorqueuers vont solliciter des gails à la lune* — the prowlers are going to steal horses by night, — this passes before the mind like a group of spectres. One knows not what one sees.

In the third place, the expedient. Slang lives on the language. It uses it in accordance with its fancy, it dips into it hap-hazard, and it often confines itself, when occasion arises, to alter it in a gross and summary fashion. Occasionally, with the ordinary words thus deformed and complicated with words of pure slang, picturesque phrases are formed, in which there can be felt the mixture of the two preceding elements, the direct creation and the metaphor: *le cab jaspine, je marronne que la roulotte de Pantin trime dans le sabri*, the dog is barking, I suspect that the diligence for Paris is passing through the woods. *Le dab est sinve, la dabuge est merloussière, la fée est bative*, the bourgeois is stupid, the bourgeoisie is cunning, the daughter is pretty. Generally, to throw listeners off the track, slang confines itself to adding to all the words of the language without distinction, an ignoble tail, a termination in *aille*, in *orgue*, in *iergue*, or in *uche*. Thus: *Vousiergue trouvaillé bon-orge ce gigotmuche?* Do you think that leg of mutton good? A phrase addressed by Cartouche to a turnkey in order to find out whether the sum offered for his escape suited him.

The termination in *mar* has been added recently.

Slang, being the dialect of corruption, quickly becomes corrupted itself. Besides this, as it is always seeking concealment, as soon as it feels that it is understood, it changes its form. Contrary to what happens with every other vegetation, every ray of light which falls upon it kills whatever it touches. Thus slang is in constant process of decomposition and recomposition; an obscure and rapid work which never pauses. It passes over more ground in ten years than a language in ten centuries. Thus *le larton* (bread) becomes *le lartif*; *le gail* (horse) becomes *le gaye*; *la fertanche* (straw) becomes *la fer-*

uille; *le momignard* (brat), *le momacque*; *les fiques* (duds), *frusques*; *la chique* (the church), *l'égrugeoir*; *le colabre* (neck), *le colas*. The devil is at first, *gahisto*, then *le rabouin*, then *the baker*; the priest is a *ratichon*, then the boar (*le sanglier*); the dagger is *le vingt-deux* (twenty-two), then *le surin*, then *le lingre*; the police are *railles*, then *roussins*, then *rousses*, then *marchands de lacets* (dealers in stay-laces), then *coquers*, then *cognes*; the executioner is *le taule*, then *Charlot*, then *l'atigreur*, then *le becquillard*. In the seventeenth century, to fight was "to give each other snuff"; in the nineteenth it is "to chew each other's throats." There have been twenty different phrases between these two extremes. Cartouche's talk would have been Hebrew to Lacenaire. All the words of this language are perpetually engaged in flight like the men who utter them.

Still, from time to time, and in consequence of this very movement, the ancient slang crops up again and becomes new once more. It has its headquarters where it maintains its sway. The Temple preserved the slang of the seventeenth century; Bicêtre, when it was a prison, preserved the slang of Thunes; There one could hear the termination in *anche* of the old Thuneurs. *Boyanches-tu* (bois-tu), do you drink? But perpetual movement remains its law, nevertheless.

If the philosopher succeeds in fixing, for a moment, for purposes of observation, this language which is incessantly evaporating, he falls into doleful and useful meditation. No study is more efficacious and more fecund in instruction. There is not a metaphor, not an analogy, in slang, which does not contain a lesson. Among these men, to beat means to feign; one beats a malady; ruse is their strength.

For them, the idea of the man is not separated from the idea of darkness. The night is called *la sorgue*; man, *l'orgue*. Man is a derivative of the night.

They have taken up the practice of considering society in the light of an atmosphere which kills them, of a fatal force, and they speak of their liberty as one would speak of his health. A man under arrest is a *sick man*; one who is condemned is a *dead man*.

The most terrible thing for the prisoner within the four walls in which he is buried, is a sort of glacial chastity, and he calls the dungeon the *castus*. In that funereal place, life outside always presents itself under its most smiling aspect. The prisoner has irons on his feet; you think, perhaps, that his thought is that it is with the feet that one walks? No; he is thinking

that it is with the feet that one dances ; so, when he has succeeded in severing his fetters, his first idea is that now he can dance, and he calls the saw the *bastringue* (public-house ball). — A name is a centre ; profound assimilation. — The ruffian has two heads, one of which reasons out his actions and leads him all his life long, and the other which he has upon his shoulders on the day of his death ; he calls the head which counsels him in crime *la sorbonne*, and the head which expiates it *la tronche*. — When a man has no longer anything but rags upon his body and vices in his heart, when he has arrived at that double moral and material degradation which the word blackguard characterizes in its two acceptations, he is ripe for crime ; he is like a well-whetted knife ; he has two cutting edges, his distress and his malice ; so slang does not say a blackguard, it says *un réquisé*. — What are the galleys ? A brazier of damnation, a hell. The convict calls himself a *fagot*. — And finally, what name do malefactors give to their prison ? The *college*. A whole penitentiary system can be evolved from that word.

Does the reader wish to know where the majority of the songs of the galleys, those refrains called in the special vocabulary *lirionfa*, have had their birth ?

Let him listen to what follows : —

There existed at the Châtelet in Paris a large and long cellar. This cellar was eight feet below the level of the Seine. It had neither windows nor air-holes, its only aperture was the door ; men could enter there, air could not. This vault had for ceiling a vault of stone, and for floor ten inches of mud. It was flagged ; but the pavement had rotted and cracked under the oozing of the water. Eight feet above the floor, a long and massive beam traversed this subterranean excavation from side to side ; from this beam hung, at short distances apart, chains three feet long, and at the end of these chains there were rings for the neck. In this vault men who had been condemned to the galleys were incarcerated until the day of their departure for Toulon. They were thrust under this beam, where each one found his fetters swinging in the darkness and waiting for him.

The chains, those pendant arms, and the necklets, those open hands, caught the unhappy wretches by the throat. They were rivetted and left there. As the chain was too short, they could not lie down. They remained motionless in that cavern, in that night, beneath that beam, almost hanging, forced to unheard-of efforts to reach their bread, jug, or their vault overhead, mud even to mid-leg, filth flowing to their very calves, broken asun-

der with fatigue, with thighs and knees giving way, clinging fast to the chain with their hands in order to obtain some rest, unable to sleep except when standing erect, and awakened every moment by the strangling of the collar; some woke no more. In order to eat, they pushed the bread, which was flung to them in the mud, along their leg with their heel until it reached their hand.

How long did they remain thus? One month, two months, six months sometimes; one stayed a year. It was the ante-chamber of the galleys. Men were put there for stealing a hare from the king. In this sepulchre-hell, what did they do? What man can do in a sepulchre, they went through the agonies of death, and what can man do in hell, they sang; for song lingers where there is no longer any hope. In the waters of Malta, when a galley was approaching, the song could be heard before the sound of the oars. Poor Survincent, the poacher, who had gone through the prison-cellar of the Châtelet, said: "It was the rhymes that kept me up." Uselessness of poetry. What is the good of rhyme?

It is in this cellar that nearly all the slang songs had their birth. It is from the dungeon of the Grand-Châtelet of Paris that comes the melancholy refrain of the Montgomery galley: "*Timaloumisaine, timaloumison.*" The majority of these songs are melancholy; some are gay; one is tender:—

Icaille est la theatre
Du petit dardant.

Here is the theatre
Of the little archer (Cupid).

Do what you will, you cannot annihilate that eternal relic in the heart of man, love.

In this world of dismal deeds, people keep their secrets. The secret is the thing above all others. The secret, in the eyes of these wretches, is unity which serves as a base of union. To betray a secret is to tear from each member of this fierce community something of his own personality. To inform against, in the energetic slang dialect, is called: "to eat the bit." As though the informer drew to himself a little of the substance of all and nourished himself on a bit of each one's flesh.

What does it signify to receive a box on the ear? Common-place metaphor replies: "It is to see thirty-six candles." Here slang intervenes and takes it up: Candle, *camoufle*. Thereupon, the ordinary tongue gives *camouflet*¹ as the synonym for *soufflet*. Thus, by a sort of infiltration from below upwards,

¹ Smoke puffed in the face of a person asleep.

with the aid of metaphor, that incalculable, trajectory slang mounts from the cavern to the Academy; and Poulailleur saying: "I light my *camoufle*," causes Voltaire to write: "Langeviell La Beaumelle deserves a hundred *camouflets*."

Researches in slang mean discoveries at every step. Study and investigation of this strange idiom lead to the mysterious point of intersection of regular society with society which is accursed.

The thief also has his food for cannon, stealable matter, you, I, whoever passes by; *le pantre*. (*Pan*, everybody.)

Slang is language turned convict.

That the thinking principle of man be thrust down ever so low, that it can be dragged and pinioned there by obscure tyrannies of fatality, that it can be bound by no one knows what fetters in that abyss, is sufficient to create consternation.

Oh, poor thought of miserable wretches!

Alas! will no one come to the succor of the human soul in that darkness? Is it her destiny there to await forever the mind, the liberator, the immense rider of Pegasi and hippocribs, the combatant of heroes of the dawn who shall descend from the azure between two wings, the radiant knight of the future? Will she forever summon in vain to her assistance the lance of light of the ideal? Is she condemned to hear the fearful approach of Evil through the density of the gulf, and to catch glimpses, nearer and nearer at hand, beneath the hideous water, of that dragon's head, that maw streaked with foam, and that writhing undulation of claws, swellings, and rings? Must it remain there, without a gleam of light, without hope, given over to that terrible approach, vaguely scented out by the monster, shuddering, dishevelled, wringing its arms, forever chained to the rock of night, a sombre Andromeda white and naked amid the shadows!

III.—SLANG WHICH WEEPS AND SLANG WHICH LAUGHS.

As the reader perceives, slang in its entirety, slang of four hundred years ago, like the slang of to-day, is permeated with that sombre, symbolical spirit which gives to all words a mien which is now mournful, now menacing. One feels in it the wild and ancient sadness of those vagrants of the Court of Miracles who played at cards with packs of their own, some of which have come down to us. The eight of clubs, for instance, represented a huge tree bearing eight enormous trefoil leaves, a sort of fantastic personification of the forest. At the foot of

this tree a fire was burning, over which three hares were roasting a huntsman on a spit, and behind him, on another fire, hung a steaming pot, whence emerged the head of a dog. Nothing can be more melancholy than these reprisals in painting, by a pack of cards, in the presence of stakes for the roasting of smugglers and of the cauldron for the boiling of counterfeiters. The diverse forms assumed by thought in the realm of slang, even song, even raillery, even menace, all partook of this powerless and dejected character. All the songs, the melodies of some of which have been collected, were humble and lamentable to the point of evoking tears. The *pègre* is always the poor *pègre*, and he is always the hare in hiding, the fugitive mouse, the flying bird. He hardly complains, he contents himself with sighing; one of his moans has come down to us: "I do not understand how God, the father of men, can torture his children and his grandchildren and hear them cry, without himself suffering torture."¹ The wretch, whenever he has time to think, makes himself small before the low, and frail in the presence of society; he lies down flat on his face, he entreats, he appeals to the side of compassion; we feel that he is conscious of his guilt.

Towards the middle of the last century a change took place, prison songs and thieves' ritournelles assumed, so to speak, an insolent and jovial mien. The plaintive *maluré* was replaced by the *larifla*. We find in the eighteenth century, in nearly all the songs of the galleys and prisons, a diabolical and enigmatical gayety. We hear this strident and lilting refrain which we should say had been lighted up by a phosphorescent gleam, and which seems to have been flung into the forest by a will-o'-the-wisp playing the fife:—

Miralabi suslababo
Mirliton ribonribette
Surlababi mirlababo
Mirliton ribonribo.

This was sung in a cellar or in a nook of the forest while cutting a man's throat.

A serious symptom. In the eighteenth century, the ancient melancholy of the dejected classes vanishes. They began to laugh. They rally the *grand meg* and the *grand dab*. Given Louis XV. they call the King of France "le Marquis de Pantin." And behold, they are almost gay. A sort of gleam proceeds from these miserable wretches, as though their consciences were not heavy within them any more. These

¹ Je n'entrave que le dail comment meck, le daron des orgues, peut atiger ses mômes et ses monignards, et les locher criblant sans être agité lui-même.

lamentable tribes of darkness have no longer merely the desperate audacity of actions, they possess the heedless audacity of mind. A sign that they are losing the sense of their criminality, and that they feel, even among thinkers and dreamers, some indefinable support which the latter themselves know not of. A sign that theft and pillage are beginning to filter into doctrines and sophisms, in such a way as to lose somewhat of their ugliness, while communicating much of it to sophisms and doctrines. A sign, in short, of some outbreak which is prodigious and near unless some diversion shall arise.

Let us pause a moment. Whom are we accusing here? Is it the eighteenth century? Is it philosophy? Certainly not. The work of the eighteenth century is healthy and good and wholesome. The encyclopedists, Diderot at their head; the physiocrats, Turgot at their head; the philosophers, Voltaire at their head; the Utopians, Rousseau at their head, — these are four sacred legions. Humanity's immense advance towards the light is due to them. They are the four vanguards of the human race, marching towards the four cardinal points of progress. Diderot towards the beautiful, Turgot towards the useful, Voltaire towards the true, Rousseau towards the just. But by the side of and above the philosophers, there were the sophists, a venomous vegetation mingled with a healthy growth, hemlock in the virgin forest. While the executioner was burning the great books of the liberators of the century on the grand staircase of the court-house, writers now forgotten were publishing, with the King's sanction, no one knows what strangely disorganizing writings, which were eagerly read by the unfortunate. Some of these publications, odd to say, which were patronized by a prince, are to be found in the Secret Library. These facts, significant but unknown, were imperceptible on the surface. Sometimes, in the very obscurity of a fact lurks its danger. It is obscure because it is underhand. Of all these writers, the one who probably then excavated in the masses the most unhealthy gallery was Restif de La Bretonne.

This work, peculiar to the whole of Europe, effected more ravages in Germany than anywhere else. In Germany, during a given period, summed up by Schiller in his famous drama *The Robbers*, theft and pillage rose up in protest against property and labor, assimilated certain specious and false elementary ideas, which, though just in appearance, were absurd in reality, enveloped themselves in these ideas, disappeared within them. after a fashion, assumed an abstract name, passed into the state of theory, and in that shape circulated among the labori-

ous, suffering, and honest masses, unknown even to the imprudent chemists who had prepared the mixture, unknown even to the masses who accepted it. Whenever a fact of this sort presents itself, the case is grave. Suffering engenders wrath; and while the prosperous classes blind themselves or fall asleep, which is the same thing as shutting one's eyes, the hatred of the unfortunate classes lights its torch at some aggrieved or ill-made spirit which dreams in a corner, and sets itself to the scrutiny of society. The scrutiny of hatred is a terrible thing.

Hence, if the ill-fortune of the times so wills it, those fearful commotions which were formerly called *jacqueries*, beside which purely political agitations are the merest child's play, which are no longer the conflict of the oppressed and the oppressor, but the revolt of discomfort against comfort. Then everything crumbles.

Jacqueries are earthquakes of the people.

It is this peril, possibly imminent towards the close of the eighteenth century, which the French Revolution, that immense act of probity, cut short.

The French Revolution, which is nothing else than the idea armed with the sword, rose erect, and, with the same abrupt movement, closed the door of ill and opened the door of good.

It put a stop to torture, promulgated the truth, expelled miasma, rendered the century healthy, crowned the populace.

It may be said of it that it created man a second time, by giving him a second soul, the right.

The nineteenth century has inherited and profited by its work, and to-day, the social catastrophe to which we lately alluded, is simply impossible. Blind is he who announces it! Foolish is he who fears it! Revolution is the vaccine of *Jacquerie*.

Thanks to the Revolution, social conditions have changed. Feudal and monarchical maladies no longer run in our blood. There is no more of the Middle Ages in our constitution. We no longer live in the days when terrible swarms within made irruptions, when one heard beneath his feet the obscure course of a dull rumble, when indescribable elevations from mole-like tunnels appeared on the surface of civilization, where the soil cracked open, where the roofs of caverns yawned, and where one suddenly beheld monstrous heads emerging from the earth.

The revolutionary sense is a moral sense. The sentiment of right, once developed, develops the sentiment of duty. The law of all is liberty, which ends where the liberty of others begins, according to Robespierre's admirable definition. Since

'89, the whole people has been dilating into a sublime individual; there is not a poor man, who, possessing his right, has not his ray of sun; the die-of-hunger feels within him the honesty of France; the dignity of the citizen is an internal armor; he who is free is scrupulous; he who votes reigns. Hence incorruptibility; hence the miscarriage of unhealthy lusts; hence eyes heroically lowered before temptations. The revolutionary wholesomeness is such, that on a day of deliverance, a 14th of July, a 10th of August, there is no longer any populace. The first cry of the enlightened and increasing throngs is: death to thieves! Progress is an honest man; the ideal and the absolute do not filch pocket-handkerchiefs. By whom were the wagons containing the wealth of the Tuileries escorted in 1848? By the rag-pickers of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Rags mounted guard over the treasure. Virtue rendered these tatterdemalions resplendent. In those wagons in chests, hardly closed, and some, even, half-open, amid a hundred dazzling caskets, was that ancient crown of France, studded with diamonds, surmounted by the carbuncle of royalty, by the Regent diamond, which was worth thirty millions. Barefooted, they guarded that crown.

Hence, no more *Jacquerie*. I regret it for the sake of the skilful. The old fear has produced its last effects in that quarter; and henceforth it can no longer be employed in politics. The principal spring of the red spectre is broken. Every one knows it now. The scare-crow scares no longer. The birds take liberties with the mannikin, foul creatures alight upon it, the bourgeois laugh at it.

IV. — THE TWO DUTIES: TO WATCH AND TO HOPE.

THIS being the case, is all social danger dispelled? Certainly not. There is no *Jacquerie*; society may rest assured on that point; blood will no longer rush to its head. But let society take heed to the manner in which it breathes. Apoplexy is no longer to be feared, but phthisis is there. Social phthisis is called misery.

One can perish from being undermined as well as from being struck by lightning.

Let us not weary of repeating, and sympathetic souls must not forget that this is the first of fraternal obligations, and selfish hearts must understand that the first of political necessities consists in thinking first of all of the disinherited and sorrowing throngs, in solacing, airing, enlightening, loving them,

in enlarging their horizon to a magnificent extent, in lavishing upon them education in every form, in offering them the example of labor, never the example of idleness, in diminishing the individual burden by enlarging the notion of the universal aim, in setting a limit to poverty without setting a limit to wealth, in creating vast fields of public and popular activity, in having, like Briareus, a hundred hands to extend in all directions to the oppressed and the feeble, in employing the collective power for that grand duty of opening workshops for all arms, schools for all aptitudes, and laboratories for all degrees of intelligence, in augmenting salaries, diminishing trouble, balancing what should be and what is, that is to say, in proportioning enjoyment to effort and a glut to need; in a word, in evolving from the social apparatus more light and more comfort for the benefit of those who suffer and those who are ignorant.

And, let us say it, all this is but the beginning. The true question is this: labor cannot be a law without being a right.

We will not insist upon this point; this is not the proper place for that.

If nature calls itself Providence, society should call itself foresight.

Intellectual and moral growth is no less indispensable than material improvement. To know is a sacrament, to think is the prime necessity, truth is nourishment as well as grain. A reason which fasts from science and wisdom grows thin. Let us enter equal complaint against stomachs and minds which do not eat. If there is anything more heart-breaking than a body perishing for lack of bread, it is a soul which is dying from hunger for the light.

The whole of progress tends in the direction of solution. Some day we shall be amazed. As the human race mounts upward, the deep layers emerge naturally from the zone of distress. The obliteration of misery will be accomplished by a simple elevation of level.

We should do wrong were we to doubt this blessed consummation.

The past is very strong, it is true, at the present moment. It censures. This rejuvenation of a corpse is surprising. Behold, it is walking and advancing. It seems a victor; this dead body is a conqueror. He arrives with his legions, superstitions, with his sword, despotism, with his banner, ignorance; a while ago, he won ten battles. He advances, he threatens, he laughs, he is at our doors. Let us not despair, on our side. Let us sell the field on which Hannibal is encamped.

What have we to fear, we who believe?

No such thing as a back-flow of ideas exists any more than there exists a return of a river on its course.

But let those who do not desire a future reflect on this matter. When they say "no" to progress, it is not the future but themselves that they are condemning. They are giving themselves a sad malady; they are inoculating themselves with the past. There is but one way of rejecting To-morrow, and that is to die.

Now, no death, that of the body as late as possible, that of the soul never, — this is what we desire.

Yes, the enigma will utter its word, the sphinx will speak, the problem will be solved.

Yes, the people, sketched out by the eighteenth century, will be finished by the nineteenth. He who doubts this is an idiot! The future blossoming, the near blossoming forth of universal well-being, is a divinely fatal phenomenon.

Immense combined propulsions direct human affairs and conduct them within a given time to a logical state, that is to say, to a state of equilibrium; that is to say, to equity. A force composed of earth and heaven results from humanity and governs it; this force is a worker of miracles; marvellous issues are no more difficult to it than extraordinary vicissitudes. Aided by science, which comes from one man, and by the event, which comes from another, it is not greatly alarmed by these contradictions in the attitude of problems, which seem impossibilities to the vulgar herd. It is no less skilful at causing a solution to spring forth from the reconciliation of ideas, than a lesson from the reconciliation of facts, and we may expect anything from that mysterious power of progress, which brought the Orient and the Occident face to face one fine day, in the depths of a sepulchre, and made the imaums converse with Bonaparte in the interior of the Great Pyramid.

In the meantime, let there be no halt, no hesitation, no pause in the grandiose onward march of minds. Social philosophy consists essentially in science and peace. Its object is, and its result must be, to dissolve wrath by the study of antagonisms. It examines, it scrutinizes, it analyzes; then it puts together once more, it proceeds by means of reduction, discarding all hatred.

More than once, a society has been seen to give way before the wind which is let loose upon mankind; history is full of the shipwrecks of nations and empires; manners, customs, laws, religions, — and some fine day, that unknown force, the hurricane, passes by and bears them all away. The civilizations of

India, of Chaldea, of Persia, of Syria, of Egypt, have disappeared one after the other. Why? We know not. What are the causes of these disasters? We do not know. Could these societies have been saved? Was it their fault? Did they persist in the fatal vice which destroyed them? What is the amount of suicide in these terrible deaths of a nation and a race? Questions to which there exists no reply. Darkness enwraps condemned civilizations. They sprung a leak, then they sank. We have nothing more to say; and it is with a sort of terror that we look on, at the bottom of that sea which is called the past, behind those colossal waves, at the shipwreck of those immense vessels, Babylon, Nineveh, Tarsus, Thebes, Rome, beneath the fearful gusts which emerge from all the mouths of the shadows. But shadows are there, and light is here. We are not acquainted with the maladies of these ancient civilizations, we do not know the infirmities of our own. Everywhere upon it we have the right of light, we contemplate its beauties, we lay bare its defects. Where it is ill, we probe; and the sickness once diagnosed, the study of the cause leads to the discovery of the remedy. Our civilization, the work of twenty centuries, is its law and its prodigy; it is worth the trouble of saving. It will be saved. It is already much to have solaced it; its enlightenment is yet another point. All the labors of modern social philosophies must converge towards this point. The thinker of to-day has a great duty — to auscultate civilization.

We repeat, that this auscultation brings encouragement; it is by this persistence in encouragement that we wish to conclude these pages, an austere interlude in a mournful drama. Beneath the social mortality, we feel human imperishableness. The globe does not perish, because it has these wounds, craters, eruptions, sulphur pits, here and there, nor because of a volcano which ejects its pus. The maladies of the people do not kill man.

And yet, any one who follows the course of social clinics shakes his head at times. The strongest, the tenderest, the most logical have their hours of weakness.

Will the future arrive? It seems as though we might almost put this question, when we behold so much terrible darkness. Melancholy face-to-face encounter of selfish and wretched. On the part of the selfish, the prejudices, shadows of costly education, appetite increasing through intoxication, a giddiness of prosperity which dulls, a fear of suffering which, in some goes as far as an aversion for the suffering, an implacable satisfaction, the *I* so swollen that it bars the soul; on the side of the

wretched covetousness, envy, hatred of seeing others enjoy, the profound impulses of the human beast towards assuaging its desires, hearts full of mist, sadness, need, fatality, impure and simple ignorance.

Shall we continue to raise our eyes to heaven? is the luminous point which we distinguish there one of those which vanish? The ideal is frightful to behold, thus lost in the depths, small, isolated, imperceptible, brilliant, but surrounded by those great, black menaces, monstrously heaped around it; yet no more in danger than a star in the maw of the clouds.



BOOK EIGHTH. — ENCHANTMENTS AND DESOLATIONS.

I. — FULL LIGHT.

THE reader has probably understood that Éponine, having recognized through the gate, the inhabitant of that Rue Plumet whither Magnon had sent her, had begun by keeping the ruffians away from the Rue Plumet, and had then conducted Marius thither, and that, after many days spent in ecstacy before that gate, Marius, drawn on by that force which draws the iron to the magnet and a lover towards the stones of which is built the house of her whom he loves, had finally entered Cosette's garden as Romeo entered the garden of Juliet. This had even proved easier for him than for Romeo; Romeo was obliged to scale a wall, Marius had only to use a little force on one of the bars of the decrepit gate which vacillated in its rusty recess, after the fashion of old people's teeth. Marius was slender and readily passed through.

As there was never any one in the street, and as Marius never entered the garden except at night, he ran no risk of being seen.

Beginning with that blessed and holy hour when a kiss betrothed these two souls, Marius was there every evening. If, at that period of her existence, Cosette had fallen in love with a man in the least unscrupulous or debauched, she would have been lost; for there are generous natures which yield themselves, and Cosette was one of them. One of woman's magnanimities is to yield. Love, at the height where it is absolute, is com-

plicated with some indescribably celestial blindness of modesty. But what dangers you run, O noble souls! Often you give the heart, and we take the body. Your heart remains with you, you gaze upon it in the gloom with a shudder. Love has no middle course; it either ruins or it saves. All human destiny lies in this dilemma. This dilemma, ruin, or safety, is set forth no more inexorably by any fatality than by love. Love is life, if it is not death. Cradle; also coffin. The same sentiment says "yes" and "no" in the human heart. Of all the things that God has made, the human heart is the one which sheds the most light, alas! and the most darkness.

God willed that Cosette's love should encounter one of the loves which save.

Throughout the whole of the month of May of that year 1832, there were there, in every night, in that poor, neglected garden, beneath that thicket which grew thicker and more fragrant day by day, two beings composed of all chastity, all innocence, overflowing with all the felicity of heaven, nearer to the archangels than to mankind, pure, honest, intoxicated, radiant, who shone for each other amid the shadows. It seemed to Cosette that Marius had a crown, and to Marius that Cosette had a nimbus. They touched each other, they gazed at each other, they clasped each other's hands, they pressed close to each other; but there was a distance which they did not pass. Not that they respected it; they did not know of its existence. Marius was conscious of a barrier, Cosette's innocence; and Cosette of a support, Marius' loyalty. The first kiss had also been the last. Marius, since that time, had not gone further than to touch Cosette's hand, or her kerchief, or a lock of her hair, with his lips. For him, Cosette was a perfume and not a woman. He inhaled her. She refused nothing, and he asked nothing. Cosette was happy, and Marius was satisfied. They lived in this ecstatic state which can be described as the dazzling of one soul by another soul. It was the ineffable first embrace of two maiden souls in the ideal. Two swans meeting on the Jungfrau.

At that hour of love, an hour when voluptuousness is absolutely mute, beneath the omnipotence of ecstasy, Marius, the pure and seraphic Marius, would rather have gone to a woman of the town than have raised Cosette's robe to the height of her ankle. Once, in the moonlight, Cosette stooped to pick up something on the ground, her bodice fell apart and permitted a glimpse of the beginning of her throat. Marius turned away his eyes.

What took place between these two beings? Nothing. They dored each other.

At night, when they were there, that garden seemed a living and a sacred spot. All flowers unfolded around them and sent them incense; and they opened their souls and scattered them over the flowers. The wanton and vigorous vegetation quivered, full of strength and intoxication, around these two innocents, and they uttered words of love which set the trees to trembling.

What words were these? Breaths. Nothing more. These breaths sufficed to trouble and to touch all nature round about. Magic power which we should find it difficult to understand were we to read in a book these conversations which are made to be borne away and dispersed like smoke wreaths by the breeze beneath the leaves. Take from those murmurs of two lovers that melody which proceeds from the soul and which accompanies them like a lyre, and what remains is nothing more than a shade; you say: "What! is that all!" eh! yes, childish prattle, repetitions, laughter at nothing, nonsense, everything that is deepest and most sublime in the world! The only things which are worth the trouble of saying and hearing!

The man who has never heard, the man who has never uttered these absurdities, these paltry remarks, is an imbecile and a malicious fellow. Cosette said to Marius:—

"Dost thou know?—"

"[In all this and athwart this celestial maidenliness, and without either of them being able to say how it had come about, they had begun to call each other *thou*.]

"Dost thou know? My name is Euphrasie."

"Euphrasie? Why no, thy name is Cosette."

"Oh! Cosette is a very ugly name that was given to me when I was a little thing. But my real name is Euphrasie. Dost thou like that name—Euphrasie?"

"Yes. But Cosette is not ugly."

"Do you like it better than Euphrasie?"

"Why, yes."

"Then I like it better too. Truly, it is pretty, Cosette. Call me Cosette."

And the smile that she added made of this dialogue an idyl worthy of a grove situated in heaven. On another occasion she gazed intently at him and exclaimed:—

"Monsieur, you are handsome, you are good-looking, you are witty, you are not at all stupid, you are much more learned than I am, but I bid you defiance with this word: I love you!"

And Marius, in the very heavens, thought he heard a strain sung by a star.

Or she bestowed on him a gentle tap because he coughed, and she said to him :—

“Don’t cough, sir ; I will not have people cough on my domain without my permission. It’s very naughty to cough and to disturb me. I want you to be well, because, in the first place, if you were not well, I should be very unhappy. What should I do then?”

And this was simply divine.

Once Marius said to Cosette :—

“Just imagine, I thought at one time that your name was Ursule.”

This made both of them laugh the whole evening.

In the middle of another conversation, he chanced to exclaim :—

“Oh ! One day, at the Luxembourg, I had a good mind to finish breaking up a veteran !” But he stopped short, and went no further. He would have been obliged to speak to Cosette of her garter, and that was impossible. This bordered on a strange theme, the flesh, before which that immense and innocent love recoiled with a sort of sacred fright.

Marius pictured life with Cosette to himself like this, without anything else ; to come every evening to the Rue Plumet, to displace the old and accommodating bar of the chief-justice’s gate, to sit elbow to elbow on that bench, to gaze through the trees at the scintillation of the on-coming night, to fit a fold of the knee of his trousers into the ample fall of Cosette’s gown, to caress her thumb-nail, to call her *thou*, to smell of the same flower, one after the other, forever, indefinitely. During this time, clouds passed above their heads. Every time that the wind blows it bears with it more of the dreams of men than of the clouds of heaven.

This chaste, almost shy love was not devoid of gallantry, by any means. To pay compliments to the woman whom a man loves is the first method of bestowing caresses, and he is half audacious who tries it. A compliment is something like a kiss through a veil. Voluptuousness mingles there with its sweet tiny point, while it hides itself. The heart draws back before voluptuousness only to love the more. Marius’ blandishments, all saturated with fancy, were, so to speak, of azure hue. The birds when they fly up yonder, in the direction of the angels, must hear such words. There were mingled with them, nevertheless, life, humanity, all the positiveness of which Marius was capable. It was what is said in the bower, a prelude to what will be said in the chamber ; a lyrical effusion, strophe and sonnet inter-

mingled, pleasing hyperboles of cooing, all the refinements of adoration arranged in a bouquet and exhaling a celestial perfume, an ineffable twitter of heart to heart.

"Oh!" murmured Marius, "how beautiful you are! I dare not look at you. It is all over with me when I contemplate you. You are a grace. I know not what is the matter with me. The hem of your gown, when the tip of your shoe peeps from beneath, upsets me. And then, what an enchanted gleam when you open your thought even but a little! You talk astonishingly good sense. It seems to me at times that you are a dream. Speak, I listen, I admire. Oh Cosette! how strange it is and how charming! I am really beside myself. You are adorable, Mademoiselle. I study your feet with the microscope and your soul with the telescope."

And Cosette answered: —

"I have been loving a little more all the time that has passed since this morning."

Questions and replies took care of themselves in this dialogue, which always turned with mutual consent upon love, as the little pith figures always turn on their peg.

Cosette's whole person was ingenuousness, ingenuity, transparency, whiteness, candor, radiance. It might have been said of Cosette that she was clear. She produced on those who saw her the sensation of April and dawn. There was dew in her eyes. Cosette was a condensation of the auroral light in the form of a woman.

It was quite simple that Marius should admire her, since he adored her. But the truth is that this little school-girl, fresh from the convent, talked with exquisite penetration and uttered, at times, all sorts of true and delicate sayings. Her prattle was conversation. She never made a mistake about anything, and she saw things justly. The woman feels and speaks with the tender instinct of the heart, which is infallible.

No one understands so well as a woman, how to say things that are, at once, both sweet and deep. Sweetness and depth, they are the whole of woman; in them lies the whole of heaven.

In this full felicity, tears welled up to their eyes every instant. A crushed lady-bug, a feather fallen from a nest, a branch of hawthorn broken, aroused their pity, and their ecstasy, sweetly mingled with melancholy, seemed to ask nothing better than to weep. The most sovereign symptom of love is a tenderness that is, at times, almost unbearable.

And, in addition to this, — all these contradictions are the lightning play of love, — they were fond of laughing, they

laughed readily and with a delicious freedom, and so familiarly that they sometimes presented the air of two boys.

Still, though unknown to hearts intoxicated with purity, nature is always present and will not be forgotten. She is there with her brutal and sublime object; and however great may be the innocence of souls, one feels in the most modest private interview, the adorable and mysterious shade which separates a couple of lovers from a pair of friends.

They idolized each other.

The permanent and the immutable are persistent. People live, they smile, they laugh, they make little grimaces with the tips of their lips, they interlace their fingers, they call each other *thou*, and that does not prevent eternity.

Two lovers hide themselves in the evening, in the twilight, in the invisible, with the birds, with the roses; they fascinate each other in the darkness with their hearts which they throw into their eyes, they murmur, they whisper, and in the meantime, immense librations of the planets fill the infinite universe.

II.—THE BEWILDERMENT OF PERFECT HAPPINESS.

THEY existed vaguely, frightened at their happiness. They did not notice the cholera which decimated Paris precisely during that very month. They had confided in each other as far as possible, but this had not extended much further than their names. Marius had told Cosette that he was an orphan, that his name was Marius Pontmercy, that he was a lawyer, that he lived by writing things for publishers, that his father had been a colonel, that the latter had been a hero, and that he, Marius, was on bad terms with his grandfather who was rich. He had also hinted at being a baron, but this had produced no effect on Cosette. She did not know the meaning of the word. Marius was Marius. On her side, she had confided to him that she had been brought up at the Petit-Picpus convent, that her mother, like his own, was dead, that her father's name was M. Fauchelevent, that he was very good, that he gave a great deal to the poor, but that he was poor himself, and that he denied himself everything though he denied her nothing.

Strange to say, in the sort of symphony in which Marius had lived since he had been in the habit of seeing Cosette, the past, even the most recent past, had become so confused and distant to him, that what Cosette told him satisfied him completely. It did not even occur to him to tell her about the nocturnal adventure in the hovel, about Thénardier, about the burn, and about

the strange attitude and singular flight of her father. Marius had momentarily forgotten all this; in the evening he did not even know that there had been a morning, what he had done, where he had breakfasted, nor who had spoken to him; he had songs in his ears which rendered him deaf to every other thought; he only existed at the hours when he saw Cosette. Then, as he was in heaven, it was quite natural that he should forget earth. Both bore languidly the indefinable burden of immaterial pleasures. Thus lived these somnambulists who are called lovers.

Alas! Who is there who has not felt all these things? Why does there come an hour when one emerges from this azure, and why does life go on afterwards?

Loving almost takes the place of thinking. Love is an ardent forgetfulness of all the rest. Then ask logic of passion if you will. There is no more absolute logical sequence in the human heart than there is a perfect geometrical figure in the celestial mechanism. For Cosette and Marius nothing existed except Marius and Cosette. The universe around them had fallen into a hole. They lived in a golden minute. There was nothing before them, nothing behind. It hardly occurred to Marius that Cosette had a father. His brain was dazzled and obliterated. Of what did these lovers talk then? We have seen, of the flowers, and the swallows, the setting sun and the rising moon, and all sorts of important things. They had told each other everything except everything. The everything of lovers is nothing. But the father, the realities, that lair, the ruffians, that adventure, to what purpose? And was he very sure that this nightmare had actually existed? They were two, and they adored each other, and beyond that there was nothing. Nothing else existed. It is probable that this vanishing of hell in our rear is inherent to the arrival of paradise. Have we beheld demons? Are there any? Have we trembled? Have we suffered? We no longer know. A rosy cloud hangs over it.

So these two beings lived in this manner, high aloft, with all that improbability which is in nature; neither at the nadir nor at the zenith, between man and seraphim, above the mire, below the ether, in the clouds; hardly flesh and blood, soul and ecstasy from head to foot; already too sublime to walk the earth, still too heavily charged with humanity to disappear in the blue, suspended like atoms which are waiting to be precipitated; apparently beyond the bounds of destiny; ignorant of that rut; yesterday, to-day, to-morrow; amazed, rapturous, floating, soaring; at times so light that they could take their flight out

into the infinite; almost prepared to soar away to all eternity. They slept wide-awake, thus sweetly lulled. Oh! splendid lethargy of the real overwhelmed by the ideal.

Sometimes, beautiful as Cosette was, Marius shut his eyes in her presence. The best way to look at the soul is through closed eyes.

Marius and Cosette never asked themselves whither this was to lead them. They considered that they had already arrived. It is a strange claim on man's part to wish that love should lead to something.

III. — THE BEGINNING OF SHADOW.

JEAN VALJEAN suspected nothing.

Cosette, who was rather less dreamy than Marius, was gay, and that sufficed for Jean Valjean's happiness. The thoughts which Cosette cherished, her tender preoccupations, Marius' image which filled her heart, took away nothing from the incomparable purity of her beautiful, chaste, and smiling brow. She was at the age when the virgin bears her love as the angel his lily. So Jean Valjean was at ease. And then, when two lovers have come to an understanding, things always go well; the third party who might disturb their love is kept in a state of perfect blindness by a restricted number of precautions which are always the same in the case of all lovers. Thus, Cosette never objected to any of Jean Valjean's proposals. Did she want to take a walk? "Yes, dear little father." Did she want to stay at home? Very good. Did he wish to pass the evening with Cosette? She was delighted. As he always went to bed at ten o'clock, Marius did not come to the garden on such occasions until after that hour, when, from the street, he heard Cosette open the long glass door on the veranda. Of course, no one ever met Marius in the daytime. Jean Valjean never even dreamed any longer that Marius was in existence. Only once, one morning, he chanced to say to Cosette: "Why, you have whitewash on your back!" On the previous evening, Marius, in a transport, had pushed Cosette against the wall.

Old Toussaint, who retired early, thought of nothing but her sleep, and was as ignorant of the whole matter as Jean Valjean.

Marius never set foot in the house. When he was with Cosette, they hid themselves in a recess near the steps, in order that they might neither be seen nor heard from the street, and there they sat, frequently contenting themselves, by way of conversation, with pressing each other's hand twenty times a minute

as they gazed at the branches of the trees. At such times, a thunderbolt might have fallen thirty paces from them, and they would not have noticed it, so deeply was the reverie of the one absorbed and sunk in the reverie of the other.

Limpid purity. Hours wholly white; almost all alike. This sort of love is a recollection of lily petals and the plumage of the dove.

The whole extent of the garden lay between them and the street. Every time that Marius entered and left, he carefully adjusted the bar of the gate in such a manner that no displacement was visible.

He usually went away about midnight, and returned to Courfeyrac's lodgings. Courfeyrac said to Bahorel:—

“Would you believe it? Marius comes home nowadays at one o'clock in the morning.”

Bahorel replied:—

“What do you expect? There's always a petard in a semi-nary fellow.”

At times, Courfeyrac folded his arms, assumed a serious air, and said to Marius:—

“You are getting irregular in your habits, young man.”

Courfeyrac, being a practical man, did not take in good part this reflection of an invisible paradise upon Marius; he was not much in the habit of concealed passions; it made him impatient, and now and then he called upon Marius to come back to reality.

One morning, he threw him this admonition:—

“My dear fellow, you produce upon me the effect of being located in the moon, the realm of dreams, the province of illusions, capital, soap-bubble. Come, be a good boy, what's her name?”

But nothing could induce Marius “to talk.” They might have torn out his nails before one of the two sacred syllables of which that ineffable name, Cosette, was composed. True love is as luminous as the dawn, and as silent as the tomb. Only, Courfeyrac saw this change in Marius, that his taciturnity was of the beaming order.

During this sweet month of May, Marius and Cosette learned to know these immense delights. To dispute and to say *you* for *thou*, simply that they might say *thou* the better afterwards. To talk at great length with very minute details, of persons in whom they took not the slightest interest in the world; another proof that in that ravishing opera called love, the libretto counts for almost nothing;

For Marius, to listen to Cosette discussing finery;

For Cosette, to listen to Marius talk in politics ;

To listen, knee pressed to knee, to the carriages rolling along the Rue de Babylone ;

To gaze upon the same planet in space, or at the same glow-worm gleaming in the grass ;

To hold their peace together ; a still greater delight than conversation ;

Etc., etc.

In the meantime, divers complications were approaching.

One evening, Marius was on his way to the rendezvous, by way of the Boulevard des Invalides. He habitually walked with drooping head. As he was on the point of turning the corner of the Rue Plumet, he heard some one quite close to him say : —

“ Good evening, Monsieur Marius.”

He raised his head and recognized Éponine.

This produced a singular effect upon him. He had not thought of that girl a single time since the day when she had conducted him to the Rue Plumet, he had not seen her again, and she had gone completely out of his mind. He had no reasons for anything but gratitude towards her, he owed her his happiness, and yet, it was embarrassing to him to meet her.

It is an error to think that passion, when it is pure and happy, leads man to a state of perfection ; it simply leads him, as we have noted, to a state of oblivion. In this situation, man forgets to be bad, but he also forgets to be good. Gratitude, duty, matters essential and important to be remembered, vanish. At any other time, Marius would have behaved quite differently to Éponine. Absorbed in Cosette, he had not even clearly put it to himself that this Éponine was named Éponine Thénardier, and that she bore the name inscribed in his father’s will, that name, for which, but a few months before, he would have so ardently sacrificed himself. We show Marius as he was. His father himself was fading out of his soul to some extent, under the splendor of his love.

He replied with some embarrassment : —

“ Ah ! so it’s you, Éponine ? ”

“ Why do you call me *you* ? Have I done anything to you ? ”

“ No,” he answered.

Certainly, he had nothing against her. Far from it. Only, he felt that he could not do otherwise, now that he used *thou* to Cosette, than say *you* to Éponine.

As he remained silent, she exclaimed : —

“ Say — ”

Then she paused. It seemed as though words failed that creature formerly so heedless and so bold. She tried to smile and could not. Then she resumed:—

“Well?”

Then she paused again, and remained with downcast eyes.

“Good evening, Mr. Marius,” said she suddenly and abruptly; and away she went.

IV. — A CAB RUNS IN ENGLISH AND BARKS IN SLANG.

THE following day was the 3d of June, 1832, a date which it is necessary to indicate on account of the grave events which at that epoch hung on the horizon of Paris in the state of lightning-charged clouds. Marius, at nightfall, was pursuing the same road as on the preceding evening, with the same thoughts of delight in his heart when he caught sight of Éponine approaching, through the trees of the boulevard. Two days in succession—this was too much. He turned hastily aside, quitted the boulevard, changed his course and went to the Rue Plumet through the Rue Monsieur.

This caused Éponine to follow him to the Rue Plumet, a thing which she had not yet done. Up to that time, she had contented herself with watching him on his passage along the boulevard without ever seeking to encounter him. It was only on the evening before that she had attempted to address him.

So Éponine followed him, without his suspecting the fact. She saw him displace the bar and slip into the garden.

She approached the railing, felt of the bars one after the other, and readily recognized the one which Marius had moved.

She murmured in a low voice and in gloomy accents:—

“None of that, Lisette!”

She seated herself on the underpinning of the railing, close beside the bar, as though she were guarding it. It was precisely at the point where the railing touched the neighboring wall. There was a dim nook there, in which Éponine was entirely concealed.

She remained thus for more than an hour, without stirring and without breathing, a prey to her thoughts.

Towards ten o'clock in the evening, one of the two or three persons who passed through the Rue Plumet, an old, belated bourgeois who was making haste to escape from this deserted spot of evil repute, as he skirted the garden railings and reached the angle which it made with the wall, heard a dull and threatening voice saying:—

"I'm no longer surprised that he comes here every evening."

The passer-by cast a glance around him, saw no one, dared not peer into the black niche, and was greatly alarmed. He redoubled his pace.

This passer-by had reason to make haste, for a very few instants later, six men, who were marching separately and at some distance from each other, along the wall, and who might have been taken for a gray patrol, entered the Rue Plumet.

The first to arrive at the garden railing halted, and waited for the others; a second later, all six were reunited.

These men began to talk in a low voice.

"This is the place," said one of them.

"Is there a *eab* [dog] in the garden?" asked another.

"I don't know. In any case, I have fetched a ball that we'll make him eat."

"Have you some putty to break the pane with?"

"Yes."

"The railing is old," interpolated a fifth, who had the voice of a ventriloquist.

"So much the better," said the second who had spoken.

"It won't screech under the saw, and it won't be hard to cut."

The sixth, who had not yet opened his lips, now began to inspect the gate, as Éponine had done an hour earlier, grasping each bar in succession, and shaking them cautiously.

Thus he came to the bar which Marius had loosened. As he was on the point of grasping this bar, a hand emerging abruptly from the darkness, fell upon his arm; he felt himself vigorously thrust aside by a push in the middle of his breast, and a hoarse voice said to him, but not loudly:—

"There's a dog."

At the same moment, he perceived a pale girl standing before him.

The man underwent that shock which the unexpected always brings. He bristled up in hideous wise; nothing is so formidable to behold as ferocious beasts who are uneasy; their terrified air evokes terror.

He recoiled and stammered:—

"What jade is this?"

"Your daughter."

It was, in fact, Éponine, who had addressed Thénardier.

At the apparition of Éponine, the other five, that is to say, Claquesous, Guelemer, Babet, Brujon, and Montparnasse had noiselessly drawn near, without precipitation, without uttering a

word, with the sinister slowness peculiar to these men of the night.

Some indescribable but hideous tools were visible in their hands. Guelemer held one of those pairs of curved pincers which prowlers call *fanchons*.

"Ah, see here, what are you about there? What do you want with us? Are you crazy?" exclaimed Thénardier, as loudly as one can exclaim and still speak low; "what have you come here to hinder our work for?"

Éponine burst out laughing, and threw herself on his neck.

"I am here, little father, because I am here. Isn't a person allowed to sit on the stones nowadays? It's you who ought not to be here. What have you come here for, since it's a biscuit? I told Magnon so. There's nothing to be done here. But embrace me, my good little father! It's a long time since I've seen you! So you're out?"

Thénardier tried to disentangle himself from Éponine's arms, and grumbled:—

"That's good. You've embraced me. Yes, I'm out. I'm not in. Now, get away with you."

But Éponine did not release her hold, and redoubled her caresses.

"But how did you manage it, little pa? You must have been very clever to get out of that. Tell me about it! And my mother? Where is mother? Tell me about mamma."

Thénardier replied:—

"She's well. I don't know, let me alone, and be off, I tell you."

"I won't go, so there now," pouted Éponine like a spoiled child; "you send me off, and it's four months since I saw you, and I've hardly had time to kiss you."

And she caught her father round the neck again.

"Come, now, this is stupid!" said Babet.

"Make haste!" said Guelemer, "the cops may pass."

The ventriloquist's voice repeated his distich:—

"Nous n' sommes pas le jour de l'an,
A bécoter papa, maman."

"This isn't New Year's day,
To peck at pa and ma."

Éponine turned to the five ruffians.

"Why, it's Monsieur Brujon. Good day, Monsieur Babet. Good day, Monsieur Claquesous. Don't you know me, Monsieur Guelemer? How goes it, Montparnasse?"

"Yes, they know you!" ejaculated Thénardier. "But good day, good evening, sheer off! leave us alone!"

"It's the hour for foxes, not for chickens," said Montparnasse.

"You see the job we have on hand here," added Babet.

Éponine caught Montparnasse's hand.

"Take care," said he, "you'll cut yourself, I've a knife open."

"My little Montparnasse," responded Éponine very gently, "you must have confidence in people. I am the daughter of my father, perhaps. Monsieur Babet, Monsieur Guelemer, I'm the person who was charged to investigate this matter."

It is remarkable that Éponine did not talk slang. That frightful tongue had become impossible to her since she had known Marius.

She pressed in her hand, small, bony, and feeble as that of a skeleton, Guelemer's huge, coarse fingers, and continued:—

"You know well that I'm no fool. Ordinarily, I am believed. I have rendered you service on various occasions. Well, I have made inquiries; you will expose yourselves to no purpose, you see. I swear to you that there is nothing in this house."

"There are lone women," said Guelemer.

"No, the persons have moved away."

"The candles haven't, anyway!" ejaculated Babet.

And he pointed out to Éponine, across the tops of the trees, a light which was wandering about in the mansard roof of the pavilion. It was Toussaint, who had stayed up to spread out some linen to dry.

Éponine made a final effort.

"Well," said she, "they're very poor folks, and it's a hovel where there isn't a sou."

"Go to the devil!" cried Thénardier. "When we've turned the house upside down and put the cellar at the top and the attic below, we'll tell you what there is inside, and whether it's francs or sous or half-farthings."

And he pushed her aside with the intention of entering.

"My good friend, Mr. Montparnasse," said Éponine, "I entreat you, you are a good fellow, don't enter."

"Take care, you'll cut yourself," replied Montparnasse.

Thénardier resumed in his decided tone:—

"Decamp, my girl, and leave men to their own affairs!"

Éponine released Montparnasse's hand, which she had grasped again, and said:—

"So you mean to enter this house?"

"Rather!" grinned the ventriloquist.

Then she set her back against the gate, faced the six ruffians

who were armed to the teeth, and to whom the night lent the visages of demons, and said in a firm, low voice:—

“Well, I don’t mean that you shall.”

They halted in amazement. The ventriloquist, however, finished his grin. She went on:—

“Friends! Listen well. This is not what you want. Now I’m talking. In the first place, if you enter this garden, if you lay a hand on this gate, I’ll scream, I’ll beat on the door, I’ll rouse everybody, I’ll have the whole six of you seized, I’ll call the police.”

“She’d do it, too,” said Thénardier in a low tone to Brujon and the ventriloquist.

She shook her head and added:—

“Beginning with my father!”

Thénardier stepped nearer.

“Not so close, my good man!” said she.

He retreated, growling between his teeth:—

“Why, what’s the matter with her?”

And he added:—

“Bitch!”

She began to laugh in a terrible way:—

“As you like, but you shall not enter here. I’m not the daughter of a dog, since I’m the daughter of a wolf. There are six of you, what matters that to me? You are men. Well, I’m a woman. You don’t frighten me. I tell you that you shan’t enter this house, because it doesn’t suit me. If you approach, I’ll bark. I told you, I’m the dog, and I don’t care a straw for you. Go your way, you bore me! Go where you please, but don’t come here, I forbid it! You can use your knives, I’ll use kicks; it’s all the same to me, come on!”

She advanced a pace nearer the ruffians, she was terrible, she burst out laughing:—

“Pardine! I’m not afraid. I shall be hungry this summer, and I shall be cold this winter. Aren’t they ridiculous, these ninnies of men, to think they can scare a girl! What! Scare? Oh, yes, much! Because you have finical poppets of mistresses who hide under the bed when you put on a big voice, forsooth! I ain’t afraid of anything, that I ain’t!”

She fastened her intent gaze upon Thénardier and said:—

“Not even of you, father!”

Then she continued, as she cast her blood-shot, spectre-like eyes upon the ruffians in turn:—

“What do I care if I’m picked up to-morrow morning on the pavement of the Rue Plumet, killed by the blows of my father’s

club, or whether I'm found a year from now in the nets at Saint Cloud or the Isle of Swans in the midst of rotten old corks and drowned dogs?"

She was forced to pause; she was seized by a dry cough, her breath came from her weak and narrow chest like the death-rattle.

She resumed:—

"I have only to cry out, and people will come, and then slap. bang! There are six of you; I represent the whole world."

Thénardier made a movement towards her.

"Don't approach!" she cried.

He halted, and said gently:—

"Well, no; I won't approach, but don't speak so loud. So you intend to hinder us in our work, my daughter? But we must earn our living all the same. Have you no longer any kind feeling for your father?"

"You bother me," said Éponine.

"But we must live, we must eat—"

"Burst!"

So saying, she seated herself on the underpinning of the fence and hummed:—

"Mon bras si dodu,
Ma jambe bien faite
Et le temps perdu."

"My arm so plump,
My leg well formed,
And time wasted."

She had set her elbow on her knee and her chin in her hand, and she swung her foot with an air of indifference. Her tattered gown permitted a view of her thin shoulder-blades. The neighboring street lantern illuminated her profile and her attitude. Nothing more resolute and more surprising could be seen.

The six rascals, speechless and gloomy at being held in check by a girl, retreated beneath the shadow cast by the lantern, and held counsel with furious and humiliated shrugs.

In the meantime she stared at them with a stern but peaceful air.

"There's something the matter with her," said Babet. "A reason. Is she in love with the dog? It's a shame to miss this, anyway. Two women, an old fellow who lodges in the back-yard, and curtains that ain't so bad at the windows. The old cove must be a Jew. I think the job's a good one."

"Well, go in, then, the rest of you," exclaimed Montparnasse. "Do the job. I'll stay here with the girl, and if she fails us—"

He flashed the knife, which he held open in his hand, in the light of the lantern.

Thénardier said not a word, and seemed ready for whatever the rest pleased.

Brujon, who was somewhat of an oracle, and who had, as the reader knows, "put up the job," had not as yet spoken. He seemed thoughtful. He had the reputation of not sticking at anything, and it was known that he had plundered a police post simply out of bravado. Besides this he made verses and songs, which gave him great authority.

Babet interrogated him : —

"You say nothing, Brujon?"

Brujon remained silent an instant longer, then he shook his head in various ways, and finally concluded to speak : —

"See here ; this morning I came across two sparrows fighting, this evening I jostled a woman who was quarrelling. All that's bad. Let's quit."

They went away.

As they went, Montparnasse muttered : —

"Never mind ! if they had wanted, I'd have cut her throat."

Babet responded : —

"I wouldn't. I don't hit a lady."

At the corner of the street they halted and exchanged the following enigmatical dialogue in a low tone : —

"Where shall we go to sleep to-night?"

"Under Pantin [Paris]."

"Have you the key to the gate, Thénardier?"

"Pardi."

Éponine, who never took her eyes off of them, saw them retreat by the road by which they had come. She rose and began to creep after them along the walls and the houses. She followed them thus as far as the boulevard.

There they parted, and she saw these six men plunge into the gloom, where they appeared to melt away.

V. — THINGS OF THE NIGHT.

AFTER the departure of the ruffians, the Rue Plumet resumed its tranquil, nocturnal aspect. That which had just taken place in this street would not have astonished a forest. The lofty trees, the copses, the heaths, the branches rudely interlaced, the tall grass, exist in a sombre manner ; the savage swarming there catches glimpses of sudden apparitions of the invisible ; that which is below man distinguishes, through the mists, that which is beyond man ; and the things of which we living beings are ignorant there meet face to face in the night. Nature, bristling

and wild, takes alarm at certain approaches in which she fancies that she feels the supernatural. The forces of the gloom know each other, and are strangely balanced by each other. Teeth and claws fear what they cannot grasp. Blood-drinking bestiality, voracious appetites, hunger in search of prey, the armed instincts of nails and jaws which have for source and aim the belly, glare and smell out uneasily the impassive spectral forms straying beneath a shroud, erect in its vague and shuddering robe, and which seem to them to live with a dead and terrible life. These brutalities, which are only matter, entertain a confused fear of having to deal with the immense obscurity condensed into an unknown being. A black figure barring the way stops the wild beast short. That which emerges from the cemetery intimidates and disconcerts that which emerges from the cave; the ferocious fear the sinister; wolves recoil when they encounter a ghoul.

VI. — MARIUS BECOMES PRACTICAL ONCE MORE TO THE EXTENT OF GIVING COSETTE HIS ADDRESS.

WHILE this sort of a dog with a human face was mounting guard over the gate, and while the six ruffians were yielding to a girl, Marius was by Cosette's side.

Never had the sky been more studded with stars and more charming, the trees more trembling, the odor of the grass more penetrating; never had the birds fallen asleep among the leaves with a sweeter noise; never had all the harmonies of universal serenity responded more thoroughly to the inward music of love; never had Marius been more captivated, more happy, more ecstatic.

But he had found Cosette sad; Cosette had been weeping. Her eyes were red.

This was the first cloud in that wonderful dream.

Marius' first word had been: "What is the matter?"

And she had replied: "This."

Then she had seated herself on the bench near the steps, and while he tremblingly took his place beside her, she had continued: —

"My father told me this morning to hold myself in readiness, because he has business, and we may go away from here."

Marius shivered from head to foot.

When one is at the end of one's life, to die means to go away; when one is at the beginning of it, to go away means to die.

For the last six weeks, Marius had little by little, slowly, by degrees, taken possession of Cosette each day. As we have already explained, in the case of first love, the soul is taken long before the body; later on, one takes the body long before the soul; sometimes one does not take the soul at all; the Faublas and the Prudhommes add: "Because there is none"; but the sarcasm is, fortunately, a blasphemy. So Marius possessed Cosette, as spirits possess, but he enveloped her with all his soul, and seized her jealously with incredible conviction. He possessed her smile, her breath, her perfume, the profound radiance of her blue eyes, the sweetness of her skin when he touched her hand, the charming mark which she had on her neck, all her thoughts. Therefore, he possessed all Cosette's dreams.

He incessantly gazed at, and he sometimes touched lightly with his breath, the short locks on the nape of her neck, and he declared to himself that there was not one of those short hairs which did not belong to him, Marius. He gazed upon and adored the things that she wore, her knot of ribbon, her gloves, her sleeves, her shoes, her cuffs, as sacred objects of which he was the master. He dreamed that he was the lord of those pretty shell combs which she wore in her hair, and he even said to himself, in confused and suppressed stammerings of voluptuousness which did not make their way to the light, that there was not a ribbon of her gown, not a mesh in her stockings, not a fold in her bodice, which was not his. Beside Cosette he felt himself beside his own property, his own thing, his own despot and his slave. It seemed as though they had so intermingled their souls, that it would have been impossible to tell them apart had they wished to take them back again. — "This is mine." "No, it is mine." "I assure you that you are mistaken. This is my property." "What you are taking as your own is myself." — Marius was something that made a part of Cosette, and Cosette was something which made a part of Marius. Marius felt Cosette within him. To have Cosette, to possess Cosette, this, to him, was not to be distinguished from breathing. It was in the midst of this faith, of this intoxication, of this virgin possession, unprecedented and absolute, of this sovereignty, that these words: "We are going away," fell suddenly, at a blow, and that the harsh voice of reality cried to him: "Cosette is not yours!"

Marius awoke. For six weeks Marius had been living, as we have said, outside of life; those words, *going away!* caused him to re-enter it harshly.

He found not a word to say. Cosette merely felt that his

hand was very cold. She said to him in her turn: "What is the matter?"

He replied in so low a tone that Cosette hardly heard him: —
"I did not understand what you said."

She began again: —

"This morning my father told me to settle all my little affairs and to hold myself in readiness, that he would give me his linen to put in a trunk, that he was obliged to go on a journey, that we were to go away, that it is necessary to have a large trunk for me and a small one for him, and that all is to be ready in a week from now, and that we might go to England."

"But this is outrageous!" exclaimed Marius.

It is certain, that, at that moment, no abuse of power, no violence, not one of the abominations of the worst tyrants, no action of Busiris, of Tiberius, or of Henry VIII., could have equalled this in atrocity, in the opinion of Marius; M. Fauchelevent taking his daughter off to England because he had business there.

He demanded in a weak voice: —

"And when do you start?"

"He did not say when."

"And when shall you return?"

"He did not say when."

Marius rose and said coldly: —

"Cosette, shall you go?"

Cosette turned toward him her beautiful eyes, all filled with anguish, and replied in a sort of bewilderment: —

"Where?"

"To England. Shall you go?"

"Why do you say *you* to me?"

"I ask you whether you will go?"

"What do you expect me to do?" she said, clasping her hands.

"So, you will go?"

"If my father goes."

"So, you will go?"

Cosette took Marius' hand, and pressed it without replying.

"Very well," said Marius, "then I will go elsewhere."

Cosette felt rather than understood the meaning of these words. She turned so pale that her face shone white through the gloom. She stammered: —

"What do you mean?"

Marius looked at her, then raised his eyes to heaven, and answered: "Nothing."

When his eyes fell again, he saw Cosette smiling at him. The smile of a woman whom one loves possesses a visible radiance, even at night.

"How silly we are! Marius, I have an idea."

"What is it?"

"If we go away, do you go too! I will tell you where! Come and join me wherever I am."

Marius was now a thoroughly roused man. He had fallen back into reality. He cried to Cosette:—

"Go away with you! Are you mad? Why, I should have to have money, and I have none! Go to England? But I am in debt now, I owe, I don't know how much, more than ten louis to Courfeyrac, one of my friends with whom you are not acquainted! I have an old hat which is not worth three francs, I have a coat which lacks buttons in front, my shirt is all ragged, my elbows are torn, my boots let in the water; for the last six weeks I have not thought about it, and I have not told you about it. You only see me at night, and you give me your love; if you were to see me in the daytime, you would give me a sou! Go to England! Eh! I haven't enough to pay for a passport!"

He threw himself against a tree which was close at hand, erect, his brow pressed close to the bark, feeling neither the wood which flayed his skin, nor the fever which was throbbing in his temples, and there he stood motionless, on the point of falling, like the statue of despair.

He remained a long time thus. One could remain for eternity in such abysses. At last he turned round. He heard behind him a faint stifled noise, which was sweet yet sad.

It was Cosette sobbing.

She had been weeping for more than two hours beside Marius as he meditated.

He came to her, fell at her knees, and slowly prostrating himself, he took the tip of her foot which peeped out from beneath her robe, and kissed it.

She let him have his way in silence. There are moments when a woman accepts, like a sombre and resigned goddess, the religion of love.

"Do not weep," he said.

She murmured:—

"Not when I may be going away, and you cannot come!"

He went on:—

"Do you love me?"

She replied, sobbing, by that word from paradise which is never more charming than amid tears : —

“ I adore you ! ”

He continued in a tone which was an indescribable caress : —

“ Do not weep. Tell me, will you do this for me, and cease to weep ? ”

“ Do you love me ? ” said she.

He took her hand.

“ Cosette, I have never given my word of honor to any one, because my word of honor terrifies me. I feel that my father is by my side. Well, I give you my most sacred word of honor, that if you go away I shall die.”

In the tone with which he uttered these words there lay a melancholy so solemn and so tranquil, that Cosette trembled. She felt that chill which is produced by a true and gloomy thing as it passes by. The shock made her cease weeping.

“ Now, listen,” said he, “ do not expect me to-morrow.”

“ Why ? ”

“ Do not expect me until the day after to-morrow.”

“ Oh ! Why ? ”

“ You will see.”

“ A day without seeing you ! But that is impossible ! ”

“ Let us sacrifice one day in order to gain our whole lives, perhaps.”

And Marius added in a low tone and in an aside : —

“ He is a man who never changes his habits, and he has never received any one except in the evening.”

“ Of what man are you speaking ? ” asked Cosette.

“ I ? I said nothing.”

“ What do you hope, then ? ”

“ Wait until the day after to-morrow.”

“ You wish it ? ”

“ Yes, Cosette.”

She took his head in both her hands, raising herself on tip-toe in order to be on a level with him, and tried to read his hope in his eyes.

Marius resumed : —

“ Now that I think of it, you ought to know my address : something might happen, one never knows ; I live with that friend named Courfeyrac, Rue de la Verrerie, No. 16.”

He searched in his pocket, pulled out his penknife, and with the blade he wrote on the plaster of the wall : —

“ 16 Rue de la Verrerie.”

In the meantime, Cosette had begun to gaze into his eyes once more.

"Tell me your thought, Marius; you have some idea. Tell it to me. Oh! tell me, so that I may pass a pleasant night."

"This is my idea: that it is impossible that God should mean to part us. Wait; expect me the day after to-morrow."

"What shall I do until then?" said Cosette. "You are outside, you go, and come! How happy men are! I shall remain entirely alone! Oh! How sad I shall be! What is it that you are going to do to-morrow evening? tell me."

"I am going to try something."

"Then I will pray to God and I will think of you here, so that you may be successful. I will question you no further, since you do not wish it. You are my master. I shall pass the evening to-morrow in singing that music from *Euryanthe* that you love, and that you came one evening to listen to, outside my shutters. But day after to-morrow you will come early. I shall expect you at dusk, at nine o'clock precisely, I warn you. Mon Dieu! how sad it is that the days are so long! On the stroke of nine, do you understand, I shall be in the garden."

"And I also."

And without having uttered it, moved by the same thought, impelled by those electric currents which place lovers in continual communication, both being intoxicated with delight even in their sorrow, they fell into each other's arms, without perceiving that their lips met while their uplifted eyes, overflowing with rapture and full of tears, gazed upon the stars.

When Marius went forth, the street was deserted. This was the moment when Éponine was following the ruffians to the boulevard.

While Marius had been dreaming with his head pressed to the tree, an idea had crossed his mind; an idea, alas! that he himself judged to be senseless and impossible. He had come to a desperate decision.

VII. — THE OLD HEART AND THE YOUNG HEART IN THE PRESENCE OF EACH OTHER.

At that epoch, Father Gillenormand was well past his ninety-first birthday. He still lived with Mademoiselle Gillenormand in the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire, No. 6, in the old house which he owned. He was, as the reader will remember, one of those antique old men who await death perfectly erect, whom age

bears down without bending, and whom even sorrow cannot curve.

Still, his daughter had been saying for some time: "My father is sinking." He no longer boxed the maids' ears; he no longer thumped the landing-place so vigorously with his cane when Basque was slow in opening the door. The Revolution of July had exasperated him for the space of barely six months. He had viewed, almost tranquilly, that coupling of words, in the *Moniteur*: M. Humblot-Conté, peer of France. The fact is, that the old man was deeply dejected. He did not bend, he did not yield; this was no more a characteristic of his physical than of his moral nature, but he felt himself giving way internally. For four years he had been waiting for Marius, with his foot firmly planted, that is the exact word, in the conviction that that good-for-nothing young scamp would ring at his door some day or other; now he had reached the point, where, at certain gloomy hours he said to himself, that if Marius made him wait much longer — It was not death that was insupportable to him; it was the idea that perhaps he should never see Marius again. The idea of never seeing Marius again had never entered his brain until that day; now the thought began to recur to him, and it chilled him. Absence, as is always the case in genuine and natural sentiments, had only served to augment the grandfather's love for the ungrateful child, who had gone off like a flash. It is during December nights, when the cold stands at ten degrees, that one thinks oftenest of the son.

M. Gillenormand was, or thought himself, above all things, incapable of taking a single step, he, — the grandfather, towards his grandson; "I would die rather," he said to himself. He did not consider himself as the least to blame; but he thought of Marius only with profound tenderness, and the mute despair of an elderly, kindly old man who is about to vanish in the dark.

He began to lose his teeth, which added to his sadness.

M. Gillenormand, without however acknowledging it to himself, for it would have rendered him furious and ashamed, had never loved a mistress as he loved Marius.

He had had placed in his chamber, opposite the head of his bed, so that it should be the first thing on which his eyes fell on waking, an old portrait of his other daughter, who was dead, Madame Pontmercy, a portrait which had been taken when she was eighteen. He gazed incessantly at that portrait. One day, he happened to say, as he gazed upon it: —

"I think the likeness is strong."

"To my sister?" inquired Mademoiselle Gillenormand.
"Yes, certainly."

The old man added:—

"And to him also."

Once as he sat with his knees pressed together, and his eyes almost closed, in a despondent attitude, his daughter ventured to say to him:—

"Father, are you as angry with him as ever?"

She paused, not daring to proceed further.

"With whom?" he demanded.

"With that poor Marius."

He raised his aged head, laid his withered and emaciated fist on the table, and exclaimed in his most irritated and vibrating tone:—

"Poor Marius, do you say! That gentleman is a knave, a wretched scoundrel, a vain little ingrate, a heartless, soulless, haughty, and wicked man!"

And he turned away so that his daughter might not see the tear that stood in his eye.

Three days later he broke a silence which had lasted four hours, to say to his daughter point-blank:—

"I had the honor to ask Mademoiselle Gillenormand never to mention him to me."

Aunt Gillenormand renounced every effort, and pronounced this acute diagnosis: "My father never cared very much for my sister after her folly. It is clear that he detests Marius."

"After her folly" meant: "after she had married the colonel."

However, as the reader has been able to conjecture, Mademoiselle Gillenormand had failed in her attempt to substitute her favorite, the officer of lancers, for Marius. The substitute, Théodule, had not been a success. M. Gillenormand had not accepted the *quid pro quo*. A vacancy in the heart does not accommodate itself to a stop-gap. Théodule, on his side, though he scented the inheritance, was disgusted at the task of pleasing. The goodman bored the lancer; and the lancer shocked the goodman. Lieutenant Théodule was gay, no doubt, but a chatter-box, frivolous, but vulgar; a high liver, but a frequenter of bad company; he had mistresses, it is true, and he had a great deal to say about them, it is true also; but he talked badly. All his good qualities had a defect. M. Gillenormand was worn out with hearing him tell about the love affairs that he had in the vicinity of the barracks in the Rue de Babylone. And then, Lieutenant Gillenormand sometimes came in his uni-

form, with the tri-colored cockade. This rendered him down right intolerable. Finally, Father Gillenormand had said to his daughter: "I've had enough of that Théodule. I haven't much taste for warriors in time of peace. Receive him if you choose. I don't know but I prefer slashers to fellows that drag their swords. The clash of blades in battle is less dismal, after all, than the clank of the scabbard on the pavement. And then, throwing out your chest like a bully and lacing yourself like a girl, with stays under your cuirass, is doubly ridiculous. When one is a veritable man, one holds equally aloof from swagger and from affected airs. He is neither a blusterer nor a finicky-hearted man. Keep your Théodule for yourself."

It was in vain that his daughter said to him: "But he is your grandnephew, nevertheless,"—it turned out that M. Gillenormand who was a grandfather to the very finger-tips, was not in the least a grand-uncle.

In fact, as he had good sense, and as he had compared the two, Théodule had only served to make him regret Marius all the more.

One evening, — it was the 24th of June, which did not prevent Father Gillenormand having a rousing fire on the hearth, — he had dismissed his daughter, who was sewing in a neighboring apartment. He was alone in his chamber, amid its pastoral scenes, with his feet propped on the andirons, half enveloped in his huge screen of coromandel lacquer, with its nine leaves, with his elbow resting on a table where burned two candles under a green shade, engulfed in his tapestry arm-chair, and in his hand a book which he was not reading. He was dressed, according to his wont, like an *incroyable*, and resembled an antique portrait by Garat. This would have made people run after him in the street, had not his daughter covered him up, whenever he went out, in a vast bishop's wadded cloak, which concealed his attire. At home, he never wore a dressing-gown, except when he rose and retired. "It gives one a look of age," said he.

Father Gillenormand was thinking of Marius lovingly and bitterly; and, as usual, bitterness predominated. His tenderness once soured always ended by boiling and turning to indignation. He had reached the point where a man tries to make up his mind and to accept that which rends his heart. He was explaining to himself that there was no longer any reason why Marius should return, that if he intended to return, he should have done it long ago, that he must renounce the idea. He was trying to accustom himself to the thought that all was over, and that he should die without having beheld "that gentleman"

again. But his whole nature revolted; his aged paternity would not consent to this. "Well!" said he,—this was his doleful refrain,—“he will not return!” His bald head had fallen upon his breast, and he fixed a melancholy and irritated gaze upon the ashes on his hearth.

In the very midst of his revery, his old servant Basque entered, and inquired:—

“Can Monsieur receive M. Marius?”

The old man sat up erect, pallid, and like a corpse which rises under the influence of a galvanic shock. All his blood had retreated to his heart. He stammered:—

“M. Marius what?”

“I don’t know,” replied Basque, intimidated and put out of countenance by his master’s air; “I have not seen him. Nicolette came and said to me: ‘There’s a young man here; say that it is M. Marius.’”

Father Gillenormand stammered in a low voice:—

“Show him in.”

And he remained in the same attitude, with shaking head, and his eyes fixed on the door. It opened once more. A young man entered. It was Marius.

Marius halted at the door, as though waiting to be bidden to enter.

His almost squalid attire was not perceptible in the obscurity caused by the shade. Nothing could be seen but his calm, grave, but strangely sad face.

It was several minutes before Father Gillenormand, dulled with amazement and joy, could see anything except a brightness as when one is in the presence of an apparition. He was on the point of swooning; he saw Marius through a dazzling light. It certainly was he, it certainly was Marius.

At last! After the lapse of four years! He grasped him entire, so to speak, in a single glance. He found him noble, handsome, distinguished, well-grown, a complete man, with a suitable mien and a charming air. He felt a desire to open his arms, to call him, to fling himself forward; his heart melted with rapture, affectionate words swelled and overflowed his breast; at length all his tenderness came to the light and reached his lips, and, by a contrast which constituted the very foundation of his nature, what came forth was harshness. He said abruptly:—

“What have you come here for?”

Marius replied with embarrassment:—

“Monsieur—”

M. Gillenormand would have liked to have Marius throw himself into his arms. He was displeased with Marius and with himself. He was conscious that he was brusque, and that Marius was cold. It caused the goodman unendurable and irritating anxiety to feel so tender and forlorn within, and only to be able to be hard outside. Bitterness returned. He interrupted Marius in a peevish tone:—

“Then why did you come?”

That “then” signified: *If you do not come to embrace me.* Marius looked at his grandfather, whose pallor gave him a face of marble.

“Monsieur—”

“Have you come to beg my pardon? Do you acknowledge your faults?”

He thought he was putting Marius on the right road, and that “the child” would yield. Marius shivered; it was the denial of his father that was required of him; he dropped his eyes and replied:—

“No, sir.”

“Then,” exclaimed the old man impetuously, with a grief that was poignant and full of wrath, “what do you want of me?”

Marius clasped his hands, advanced a step, and said in a feeble and trembling voice:—

“Sir, have pity on me.”

These words touched M. Gillenormand; uttered a little sooner, they would have rendered him tender, but they came too late. The grandfather rose; he supported himself with both hands on his cane; his lips were white, his brow wavered, but his lofty form towered above Marius as he bowed.

“Pity on you, sir! It is youth demanding pity of the old man of ninety-one! You are entering into life, I am leaving it; you go to the play, to balls, to the café, to the billiard-hall; you have wit, you please the women, you are a handsome fellow; as for me, I spit on my brands in the heart of summer; you are rich with the only riches that are really such, I possess all the poverty of age; infirmity, isolation! You have your thirty-two teeth, a good digestion, bright eyes, strength, appetite, health, gayety, a forest of black hair; I have no longer even white hair, I have lost my teeth, I am losing my legs, I am losing my memory; there are three names of streets that I confound incessantly, the Rue Charlot, the Rue du Chaume, and the Rue Saint-Claude, that is what I have come to; you have before you the whole future, full of sunshine, and I am beginning to lose my sight, so far am I advancing into the night;

you are in love, that is a matter of course, I am beloved by no one in all the world; and you ask pity of me! Parbleu! Molière forgot that. If that is the way you jest at the court-house, Messieurs the lawyers, I sincerely compliment you. You are droll."

And the octogenarian went on in a grave and angry voice:—

"Come now, what do you want of me?"

"Sir," said Marius, "I know that my presence is displeasing to you, but I have come merely to ask one thing of you, and then I shall go away immediately."

"You are a fool!" said the old man. "Who said that you were to go away?"

This was the translation of the tender words which lay at the bottom of his heart:—

"Ask my pardon! Throw yourself on my neck!"

M. Gillenormand felt that Marius would leave him in a few moments, that his harsh reception had repelled the lad, that his hardness was driving him away; he said all this to himself, and it augmented his grief; and as his grief was straightway converted into wrath, it increased his harshness. He would have liked to have Marius understand, and Marius did not understand, which made the goodman furious.

He began again:—

"What! you deserted me, your grandfather, you left my house to go no one knows whither, you drove your aunt to despair, you went off, it is easily guessed, to lead a bachelor life; it's more convenient, to play the dandy, to come in at all hours, to amuse yourself; you have given me no signs of life, you have contracted debts without even telling me to pay them, you have become a smasher of windows and a blusterer, and, at the end of four years, you come to me, and that is all that you have to say to me!"

This violent fashion of driving a grandson to tenderness was productive only of silence on the part of Marius. M. Gillenormand folded his arms; a gesture which with him was peculiarly imperious, and apostrophized Marius bitterly:—

"Let us make an end of this. You have come to ask something of me, you say? Well, what? What is it? Speak!"

"Sir," said Marius, with the look of a man who feels that he is falling over a precipice, "I have come to ask your permission to marry."

M. Gillenormand rang the bell. Basque opened the door half-way.

"Call my daughter."

A second later, the door opened once more, Mademoiselle Gillenormand did not enter, but showed herself; Marius was standing, mute, with pendent arms and the face of a criminal; M. Gillenormand was pacing back and forth in the room. He turned to his daughter and said to her:—

“Nothing. It is Monsieur Marius. Say good day to him. Monsieur wishes to marry. That’s all. Go away.”

The curt, hoarse sound of the old man’s voice announced a strange degree of excitement. The aunt gazed at Marius with a frightened air, hardly appeared to recognize him, did not allow a gesture or a syllable to escape her, and disappeared at her father’s breath more swiftly than a straw before the hurricane.

In the meantime, Father Gillenormand had returned and placed his back against the chimney-piece once more.

“You marry! At one and twenty! You have arranged that! You have only a permission to ask! a formality. Sit down, sir. Well, you have had a revolution since I had the honor to see you last. The Jacobins got the upper hand. You must have been delighted. Are not you a Republican since you are a Baron? You can make that agree. The Republic makes a good sauce for the barony. Are you one of those decorated by July? Have you taken the Louvre at all, sir? Quite near here, in the Rue Saint-Antoine, opposite the Rue des Nonaindières, there is a cannon-ball incrustéd in the wall of the third story of a house with this inscription: ‘July 28th, 1830.’ Go take a look at that. It produces a good effect. Ah! those friends of yours do very pretty things. By the way, aren’t they erecting a fountain in the place of the monument of M. le Duc de Berry? So you want to marry? Whom? Can one inquire without indiscretion?”

He paused, and, before Marius had time to answer, he added violently:—

“Come now, you have a profession? A fortune made? How much do you earn at your trade of lawyer?”

“Nothing,” said Marius, with a sort of firmness and resolution that was almost fierce.

“Nothing? Then all that you have to live upon is the twelve hundred livres that I allow you?”

Marius did not reply. M. Gillenormand continued:—

“Then I understand the girl is rich?”

“As rich as I am.”

“What! No dowry?”

“No.”

"Expectations?"

"I think not."

"Utterly naked! What's the father?"

"I don't know."

"And what's her name?"

"Mademoiselle Fauchelevant."

"Fauchewhat?"

"Fauchelevant."

"Pttt!" ejaculated the old gentleman.

"Sir!" exclaimed Marius.

M. Gillenormand interrupted him with the tone of a man who is speaking to himself:—

"That's right, one and twenty years of age, no profession, twelve hundred livres a year, Madame la Baronne de Pontmercy will go and purchase a couple of sous' worth of parsley from the fruiterer."

"Sir," repeated Marius, in the despair at the last hope, which was vanishing, "I entreat you! I conjure you in the name of Heaven, with clasped hands, sir, I throw myself at your feet, permit me to marry her!"

The old man burst into a shout of strident and mournful laughter, coughing and laughing at the same time.

"Ah! ah! ah! You said to yourself: 'Pardine! I'll go hunt up that old blockhead, that absurd numskull! What a shame that I'm not twenty-five! How I'd treat him to a nice respectful summons! How nicely I'd get along without him! It's nothing to me, I'd say to him: 'You're only too happy to see me, you old idiot, I want to marry, I desire to wed Mamselle No-matter-whom, daughter of Monsieur No-matter-what, I have no shoes, she has no chemise, that just suits; I want to throw my career, my future, my youth, my life to the dogs; I wish to take a plunge into wretchedness with a woman around my neck, that's my idea, and you must consent to it!' and the old fossil will consent.' Go, my lad, do as you like, attach your paving-stone, marry your Pousselevant, your Coupelevant—Never, sir, never!"

"Father—"

"Never!"

At the tone in which that "never" was uttered, Marius lost all hope. He traversed the chamber with slow steps, with bowed head, tottering and more like a dying man than like one merely taking his departure. M. Gillenormand followed him with his eyes, and at the moment when the door opened, and Marius was on the point of going out, he advanced four paces,

with the senile vivacity of impetuous and spoiled old gentlemen, seized Marius by the collar, brought him back energetically into the room, flung him into an arm-chair and said to him : —

“ Tell me all about it ! ”

It was that single word “ father ” which had effected this revolution.

Marius stared at him in bewilderment. M. Gillenormand’s mobile face was no longer expressive of anything but rough and ineffable good-nature. The grandsire had given way before the grandfather.

“ Come, see here, speak, tell me about your love affairs, jabber, tell me everything ! Sapristi ! how stupid young folks are ! ”

“ Father — ” repeated Marius.

The old man’s entire countenance lighted up with indescribable radiance.

“ Yes, that’s right, call me father, and you’ll see ! ”

There was now something so kind, so gentle, so open-hearted, and so paternal in this brusqueness, that Marius, in the sudden transition from discouragement to hope, was stunned and intoxicated by it, as it were. He was seated near the table, the light from the candles brought out the dilapidation of his costume, which Father Gillenormand regarded with amazement.

“ Well, father — ” said Marius.

“ Ah, by the way,” interrupted M. Gillenormand, “ you really have not a penny then ? You are dressed like a pick-pocket.”

He rummaged in a drawer, drew forth a purse, which he laid on the table : “ Here are a hundred louis, buy yourself a hat.”

“ Father,” pursued Marius, “ my good father, if you only knew ! I love her. You cannot imagine it ; the first time I saw her was at the Luxembourg, she came there ; in the beginning, I did not pay much heed to her, and then, I don’t know how it came about, I fell in love with her. Oh ! how unhappy that made me ! Now, at last, I see her every day, at her own home, her father does not know it, just fancy, they are going away, it is in the garden that we meet, in the evening, her father means to take her to England, then I said to myself : ‘ I’ll go and see my grandfather and tell him all about the affair. I should go mad first, I should die, I should fall ill, I should throw myself into the water. I absolutely must marry her, since I should go mad otherwise.’ This is the whole truth, and I do not think that I have omitted anything. She lives in a garden with an

iron fence, in the Rue Plumet. It is in the neighborhood of the Invalides."

Father Gillenormand had seated himself, with a beaming countenance, beside Marius. As he listened to him and drank in the sound of his voice, he enjoyed at the same time a protracted pinch of snuff. At the words "Rue Plumet" he interrupted his inhalation and allowed the remainder of his snuff to fall upon his knees.

"The Rue Plumet, the Rue Plumet, did you say?—Let us see!—Are there not barracks in that vicinity?—Why, yes, that's it. Your cousin Théodule has spoken to me about it. The lancer, the officer. A gay girl, my good friend, a gay girl!—Pardieu, yes, the Rue Plumet. It is what used to be called the Rue Blomet.—It all comes back to me now. I have heard of that little girl of the iron railing in the Rue Plumet. In a garden, a Pamela. Your taste is not bad. She is said to be a very tidy creature. Between ourselves, I think that simpleton of a lancer has been courting her a bit. I don't know where he did it. However, that's not to the purpose. Besides, he is not to be believed. He brags, Marius! I think it quite proper that a young man like you should be in love. It's the right thing at your age. I like you better as a lover than as a Jacobin. I like you better in love with a petticoat, sapristi! with twenty petticoats, than with M. de Robespierre. For my part, I will do myself the justice to say, that in the line of *sans-culottes*, I have never loved any one but women. Pretty girls are pretty girls, the deuce! There's no objection to that. As for the little one, she receives you without her father's knowledge. That's in the established order of things. I have had adventures of that same sort myself. More than one. Do you know what is done then? One does not take the matter ferociously; one does not precipitate himself into the tragic; one does not make one's mind to marriage and M. le Maire with his scarf. One simply behaves like a fellow of spirit. One shows good sense. Slip along, mortals; don't marry. You come and look up your grandfather, who is a good-natured fellow at bottom, and who always has a few rolls of louis in an old drawer; you say to him: 'See here, grandfather.' And the grandfather says: 'That's a simple matter. Youth must amuse itself, and old age must wear out. I have been young, you will be old. Come, my boy, you shall pass it on to your grandson. Here are two hundred pistoles. Amuse yourself, deuce take it!' Nothing better! That's the way the affair should be treated. You don't marry, but that does no harm. You understand me?"

Marius, petrified and incapable of uttering a syllable, made a sign with his head that he did not.

The old man burst out laughing, winked his aged eye, gave him a slap on the knee, stared him full in the face with a mysterious and beaming air, and said to him, with the tenderest of shrugs of the shoulder:—

“Booby! make her your mistress.”

Marius turned pale. He had understood nothing of what his grandfather had just said. This twaddle about the Rue Blomett Pamela, the barracks, the lancer, had passed before Marius like a dissolving view. Nothing of all that could bear any reference to Cosette, who was a lily. The good man was wandering in his mind. But this wandering terminated in words which Marius did understand, and which were a mortal insult to Cosette. Those words, “make her your mistress,” entered the heart of the strict young man like a sword.

He rose, picked up his hat which lay on the floor, and walked to the door with a firm, assured step. There he turned round, bowed deeply to his grandfather, raised his head erect again, and said:—

“Five years ago you insulted my father; to-day you have insulted my wife. I ask nothing more of you, sir. Farewell.”

Father Gillenormand, utterly confounded, opened his mouth, extended his arms, tried to rise, and before he could utter a word, the door closed once more, and Marius had disappeared.

The old man remained for several minutes motionless and as though struck by lightning, without the power to speak or breathe, as though a clenched fist grasped his throat. At last he tore himself from his arm-chair, ran, so far as a man can run at ninety-one, to the door, opened it, and cried:—

“Help! Help!”

His daughter made her appearance, then the domestics. He began again, with a pitiful rattle: “Run after him! Bring him back! What have I done to him? He is mad! He is going away! Ah! my God! Ah! my God! This time he will not come back!”

He went to the window which looked out on the street, threw it open with his aged and palsied hands, leaned out more than half-way, while Basque and Nicolette held him behind, and shouted:—

“Marius! Marius! Marius! Marius!”

But Marius could no longer hear him, for at that moment he was turning the corner of the Rue Saint-Louis.

The octogenarian raised his hands to his temples two or three

times with an expression of anguish, recoiled tottering, and fell back into an arm-chair, pulseless, voiceless, tearless, with quivering head and lips which moved with a stupid air, with nothing in his eyes and nothing any longer in his heart except a gloomy and profound something which resembled night.



BOOK NINTH. — WHITHER ARE THEY GOING?

I. — JEAN VALJEAN.

THAT same day, towards four o'clock in the afternoon, Jean Valjean was sitting alone on the back side of one of the most solitary slopes in the Champ-de-Mars. Either from prudence, or from a desire to meditate, or simply in consequence of one of those insensible changes of habit which gradually introduce themselves into the existence of every one, he now rarely went out with Cosette. He had on his workman's waistcoat, and trousers of gray linen; and his long-visored cap concealed his countenance.

He was calm and happy now beside Cosette; that which had, for a time, alarmed and troubled him had been dissipated; but for the last week or two, anxieties of another nature had come up. One day, while walking on the boulevard, he had caught sight of Thénardier; thanks to his disguise, Thénardier had not recognized him; but since that day, Jean Valjean had seen him repeatedly, and he was now certain that Thénardier was prowling about in their neighborhood.

This had been sufficient to make him come to a decision.

Moreover, Paris was not tranquil: political troubles presented this inconvenient feature, for any one who had anything to conceal in his life, that the police had grown very uneasy and very suspicious, and that while seeking to ferret out a man like Pépin or Morey, they might very readily discover a man like Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean had made up his mind to quit Paris, and even France, and go over to England.

He had warned Cosette. He wished to set out before the end of the week.

He had seated himself on the slope in the Champ-de-Mars, turning over all sorts of thoughts in his mind, — Thénardier,

the police, the journey, and the difficulty of procuring a passport.

He was troubled from all these points of view.

Last of all, an inexplicable circumstance which had just attracted his attention, and from which he had not yet recovered, had added to his state of alarm.

On the morning of that very day, when he alone of the household was stirring, while strolling in the garden before Cosette's shutters were open, he had suddenly perceived on the wall, the following line, engraved, probably with a nail:—

16 Rue de la Verrierie.

This was perfectly fresh, the grooves in the ancient black mortar were white, a tuft of nettles at the foot of the wall was powdered with the fine, fresh plaster.

This had probably been written on the preceding night.

What was this? A signal for others? A warning for himself?

In any case, it was evident that the garden had been violated, and that strangers had made their way into it.

He recalled the odd incidents which had already alarmed the household.

His mind was now filling in this canvas.

He took good care not to speak to Cosette of the line written on the wall, for fear of alarming her.

In the midst of his preoccupations, he perceived, from a shadow cast by the sun, that some one had halted on the crest of the slope immediately behind him.

He was on the point of turning round, when a paper folded in four, fell upon his knees as though a hand had dropped it over his head.

He took the paper, unfolded it, and read these words written in large characters, with a pencil:—

“MOVE AWAY FROM YOUR HOUSE.”

Jean Valjean sprang hastily to his feet; there was no one on the slope; he gazed all around him and perceived a creature larger than a child, not so large as a man, clad in a gray blouse and trousers of dust-colored cotton velvet, who was jumping over the parapet and who slipped into the moat of the Champ-de-Mars.

Jean Valjean returned home at once, in a very thoughtful mood.

II. — MARIUS.

MARIUS had left M. Gillenormand in despair. He had entered the house with very little hope, and quitted it with immense despair.

However, and those who have observed the depths of the human heart will understand this, the officer, the lancer, the ninny, Cousin Théodule, had left no trace in his mind. Not the slightest. The dramatic poet might, apparently, expect some complications from this revelation made point-blank by the grandfather to the grandson. But what the drama would gain thereby, truth would lose. Marius was at an age when one believes nothing in the line of evil; later on comes the age when one believes everything. Suspicions are nothing else than wrinkles. Early youth has none of them. That which overwhelmed Othello glides innocuous over Candide. Suspect Cosette! There are hosts of crimes which Marius could sooner have committed.

He began to wander about the streets, the resource of those who suffer. He thought of nothing, so far as he could afterwards remember. At two o'clock in the morning he returned to Courfeyrac's quarters and flung himself, without undressing, on his mattress. The sun was shining brightly when he sank into that frightful leaden slumber which permits ideas to go and come in the brain. When he awoke, he saw Courfeyrac, Enjolras, Feuilly, and Combeferre standing in the room with their hats on and all ready to go out.

Courfeyrac said to him: —

“Are you coming to General Lamarque's funeral?”

It seemed to him that Courfeyrac was speaking Chinese.

He went out some time after them. He put in his pocket the pistols which Javert had given him at the time of the adventure on the 3d of February, and which had remained in his hands. These pistols were still loaded. It would be difficult to say what vague thought he had in his mind when he took them with him.

All day long he prowled about, without knowing where he was going; it rained at times, he did not perceive it; for his dinner he purchased a penny roll at a baker's, put it in his pocket and forgot it. It appears that he took a bath in the Seine without being aware of it. There are moments when a man has a furnace within his skull. Marius was passing through one of those moments. He no longer hoped for anything; this

step he had taken since the preceding evening. He waited for night with feverish impatience, he had but one idea clearly before his mind ; — this was, that at nine o'clock he should see Cosette. This last happiness now constituted his whole future ; after that, gloom. At intervals, as he roamed through the most deserted boulevards, it seemed to him that he heard strange noises in Paris. He thrust his head out of his reverie and said : “ Is there fighting on hand ? ”

At nightfall, at nine o'clock precisely, as he had promised Cosette, he was in the Rue Plumet. When he approached the grating he forgot everything. It was forty-eight hours since he had seen Cosette ; he was about to behold her once more ; every other thought was effaced, and he felt only a profound and unheard-of joy. Those minutes in which one lives centuries always have this sovereign and wonderful property, that at the moment when they are passing they fill the heart completely.

Marius displaced the bar, and rushed headlong into the garden. Cosette was not at the spot where she ordinarily waited for him. He traversed the thicket, and approached the recess near the flight of steps : “ She is waiting for me there,” said he. Cosette was not there. He raised his eyes, and saw that the shutters of the house were closed. He made the tour of the garden, the garden was deserted. Then he returned to the house, and, rendered senseless by love, intoxicated, terrified, exasperated with grief and uneasiness, like a master who returns home at an evil hour, he tapped on the shutters. He knocked and knocked again, at the risk of seeing the window open, and her father's gloomy face make its appearance, and demand : “ What do you want ? ” This was nothing in comparison with what he dimly caught a glimpse of. When he had rapped, he lifted up his voice and called Cosette. — “ Cosette ! ” he cried ; “ Cosette ! ” he repeated imperiously. There was no reply. All was over. No one in the garden ; no one in the house.

Marius fixed his despairing eyes on that dismal house, which was as black and as silent as a tomb and far more empty. He gazed at the stone seat on which he had passed so many adorable hours with Cosette. Then he seated himself on the flight of steps, his heart filled with sweetness and resolution, he blessed his love in the depths of his thought, and he said to himself that, since Cosette was gone, all that there was left for him was to die.

All at once he heard a voice which seemed to proceed from the street, and which was calling to him through the trees : —

“ Mr. Marius ! ”

He started to his feet.

"Hey?" said he.

"Mr. Marius, are you there?"

"Yes."

"Mr. Marius," went on the voice, "your friends are waiting for you at the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrière."

This voice was not wholly unfamiliar to him. It resembled the hoarse, rough voice of Éponine. Marius hastened to the gate, thrust aside the movable bar, passed his head through the aperture, and saw some one who appeared to him to be a young man, disappearing at a run into the gloom.

III. — M. MABEUF.

JEAN VALJEAN's purse was of no use to M. Mabeuf. M. Mabeuf, in his venerable, infantile austerity, had not accepted the gift of the stars; he had not admitted that a star could coin itself into louis d'or. He had not divined that what had fallen from heaven had come from Gavroche. He had taken the purse to the police commissioner of the quarter, as a lost article placed by the finder at the disposal of claimants. The purse was actually lost. It is unnecessary to say that no one claimed it, and that it did not succor M. Mabeuf.

Moreover, M. Mabeuf had continued his downward course.

His experiments on indigo had been no more successful in the Jardin des Plantes than in his garden at Austerlitz. The year before he had owed his housekeeper's wages; now, as we have seen, he owed three quarters of his rent. The pawn-shop had sold the plates of his *Flora* after the expiration of thirteen months. Some coppersmith had made stewpans of them. His copper plates gone, and being unable to complete even the incomplete copies of his *Flora* which were in his possession, he had disposed of the text, at a miserable price, as waste paper, to a second-hand bookseller. Nothing now remained to him of his life's work. He set to work to eat up the money for these copies. When he saw that this wretched resource was becoming exhausted, he gave up his garden and allowed it to run to waste. Before this, a long time before, he had given up his two eggs and the morsel of beef which he ate from time to time. He dined on bread and potatoes. He had sold the last of his furniture, then all duplicates of his bedding, his clothing and his blankets, then his herbariums and prints; but he still retained his most precious books, many of which were of the greatest rarity, among others, *Les Quadrins Historiques de la Bible*,

edition of 1560; *La Concordance des Bibles*, by Pierre de Besse; *Les Marguerites de la Marguerite*, of Jean de La Haye, with a dedication to the Queen of Navarre; the book *de la Charge et Dignité de l'Ambassadeur*, by the Sieur de Villiers Hotman; a *Florilegium Rabbincum* of 1644; a *Tibullus* of 1567, with this magnificent inscription: *Venetiis, in ædibus Manutianis*; and lastly, a Diogenes Laertius, printed at Lyons in 1644, which contained the famous variant of the manuscript 411, thirteenth century, of the Vatican, and those of the two manuscripts of Venice, 393 and 394, consulted with such fruitful results by Henri Estienne, and all the passages in Doric dialect which are only found in the celebrated manuscript of the twelfth century belonging to the Naples Library. M. Mabeuf never had any fire in his chamber, and went to bed at sundown, in order not to consume any candles. It seemed as though he had no longer any neighbors: people avoided him when he went out; he perceived the fact. The wretchedness of a child interests a mother, the wretchedness of a young man interests a young girl, the wretchedness of an old man interests no one. It is, of all distresses, the coldest. Still, Father Mabeuf had not entirely lost his childlike serenity. His eyes acquired some vivacity when they rested on his books, and he smiled when he gazed at the Diogenes Laertius, which was a unique copy. His bookcase with glass doors was the only piece of furniture which he had kept beyond what was strictly indispensable.

One day, Mother Plutarque said to him:—

“I have no money to buy any dinner.”

What she called dinner was a loaf of bread and four or five potatoes.

“On credit?” suggested M. Mabeuf.

“You know well that people refuse me.”

M. Mabeuf opened his bookcase, took a long look at all his books, one after another, as a father obliged to decimate his children would gaze upon them before making a choice, then seized one hastily, put it in under his arm and went out. He returned two hours later, without anything under his arm, laid thirty sous on the table, and said:—

“You will get something for dinner.”

From that moment forth, Mother Plutarque saw a sombre veil, which was never more lifted, descend over the old man's candid face.

On the following day, on the day after, and on the day after that, it had to be done again.

M. Mabeuf went out with a book and returned with a coin.

As the second-hand dealers perceived that he was forced to sell, they purchased of him for twenty sous, that for which he had paid twenty francs, sometimes at those very shops. Volume by volume, the whole library went the same road. He said at times: "But I am eighty;" as though he cherished some secret hope that he should arrive at the end of his days before reaching the end of his books. His melancholy increased. Once, however, he had a pleasure. He had gone out with a Robert Estienne, which he had sold for thirty-five sous under the Quai Malaquais, and he returned with an Aldus which he had bought for forty sous in the Rue des Grès. — "I owe five sous," he said, beaming on Mother Plutarque. That day he had no dinner.

He belonged to the Horticultural Society. His destitution became known there. The president of the society came to see him, promised to speak to the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce about him, and did so. — "Why, what!" exclaimed the Minister, "I should think so! An old savant! a botanist! an inoffensive man! Something must be done for him!" On the following day, M. Mabeuf received an invitation to dine with the Minister. Trembling with joy, he showed the letter to Mother Plutarque. "We are saved!" said he. On the day appointed, he went to the Minister's house. He perceived that his ragged cravat, his long, square coat, and his waxed shoes astonished the ushers. No one spoke to him, not even the Minister. About ten o'clock in the evening, while he was still waiting for a word, he heard the Minister's wife, a beautiful woman in a low-necked gown whom he had not ventured to approach, inquire: "Who is that old gentleman?" He returned home on foot at midnight, in a driving rain-storm. He had sold an Elzevir to pay for a carriage in which to go thither. •

He had acquired the habit of reading a few pages in his Diogenes Laertius every night, before he went to bed. He knew enough Greek to enjoy the peculiarities of the text which he owned. He had now no other enjoyment. Several weeks passed. All at once, Mother Plutarque fell ill. There is one thing sadder than having no money with which to buy bread at the baker's, and that is having no money to purchase drugs at the apothecary's. One evening, the doctor had ordered a very expensive potion. And the malady was growing worse; a nurse was required. M. Mabeuf opened his bookcase; there was nothing there. The last volume had taken its departure. All that was left to him was Diogenes Laertius. He put this unique copy under his arm, and went out. It was the 4th of June, 1832; he went to the

Porte Saint-Jacques, to Royal's successor, and returned with one hundred francs. He laid the pile of five-franc pieces on the old serving-woman's night-stand, and returned to his chamber without saying a word.

On the following morning, at dawn, he seated himself on the overturned post in his garden, and he could be seen over the top of the hedge, sitting the whole morning motionless, with drooping head, his eyes vaguely fixed on the withered flower-beds. It rained at intervals; the old man did not seem to perceive the fact.

In the afternoon, extraordinary noises broke out in Paris. They resembled shots and the clamors of a multitude.

Father Mabeuf raised his head. He saw a gardener passing, and inquired:—

"What is it?"

The gardener, spade on back, replied in the most unconcerned tone:—

"It is the riots."

"What riots?"

"Yes, they are fighting."

"Why are they fighting?"

"Ah, good Heavens!" ejaculated the gardener.

"In what direction?" went on M. Mabeuf.

"In the neighborhood of the Arsenal."

Father Mabeuf went to his room, took his hat, mechanically sought for a book to place under his arm, found none, said: "Ah! truly!" and went off with a bewildered air.



BOOK TENTH.—THE 5TH OF JUNE, 1832.

I.—THE SURFACE OF THE QUESTION.

OF what is revolt composed? Of nothing and of everything. Of an electricity disengaged, little by little, of a flame suddenly darting forth, of a wandering force, of a passing breath. This breath encounters heads which speak, brains which dream, souls which suffer, passions which burn, wretchedness which howls, and bears them away.

Whither?

At random. Athwart the state, the laws, athwart prosperity and the insolence of others.

Irritated convictions, embittered enthusiasms, agitated indignations, instincts of war which have been repressed, youthful courage which has been exalted, generous blindness; curiosity, the taste for change, the thirst for the unexpected, the sentiment which causes one to take pleasure in reading the posters for the new play, and love, the prompter's whistle, at the theatre; the vague hatreds, rancors, disappointments, every vanity which thinks that destiny has bankrupted it; discomfort, empty dreams, ambitions that are hedged about, whoever hopes for a downfall, some outcome, in short, at the very bottom, the rabble, that mud which catches fire,—such are the elements of revolt. That which is grandest and that which is basest; the beings who prowl outside of all bounds, awaiting an occasion, bohemians, vagrants, vagabonds of the cross-roads, those who sleep at night in a desert of houses with no other roof than the cold clouds of heaven, those who, each day, demand their bread from chance and not from toil, the unknown of poverty and nothingness, the bare-armed, the bare-footed, belong to revolt. Whoever cherishes in his soul a secret revolt against any deed whatever on the part of the state, of life or of fate, is ripe for riot, and, as soon as it makes its appearance, he begins to quiver, and to feel himself borne away with the whirlwind.

Revolt is a sort of waterspout in the social atmosphere which forms suddenly in certain conditions of temperature, and which, as it eddies about, mounts, descends, thunders, tears, razes, crushes, demolishes, uproots, bearing with it great natures and small, the strong man and the feeble mind, the tree trunk and the stalk of straw. Woe to him whom it bears away as well as to him whom it strikes! It breaks the one against the other.

It communicates to those whom it seizes an indescribable and extraordinary power. It fills the first-comer with the force of events; it converts everything into projectiles. It makes a cannon-ball of a rough stone, and a general of a porter.

If we are to believe certain oracles of crafty political views, a little revolt is desirable from the point of view of power. System: revolt strengthens those governments which it does not overthrow. It puts the army to the test; it consecrates the bourgeoisie, it draws out the muscles of the police; it demonstrates the force of the social framework. It is an exercise in gymnastics; it is almost hygiene. Power is in better health after a revolt, as a man is after a good rubbing down.

Revolt, thirty years ago, was regarded from still other points of view.

There is for everything a theory, which proclaims itself "good

sense"; Philintus against Alcestis; mediation offered between the false and the true; explanation, admonition, rather haughty extenuation which, because it is mingled with blame and excuse, thinks itself wisdom, and is often only pedantry. A whole political school called "the golden mean" has been the outcome of this. As between cold water and hot water, it is the lukewarm water party. This school with its false depth, all on the surface, which dissects effects without going back to first causes, chides from its height of a demi-science, the agitation of the public square.

If we listen to this school, "The riots which complicated the affair of 1830 deprived that great event of a portion of its purity. The Revolution of July had been a fine popular gale, abruptly followed by blue sky. They made the cloudy sky reappear. They caused that revolution, at first so remarkable for its unanimity, to degenerate into a quarrel. In the Revolution of July, as in all progress accomplished by fits and starts, there had been secret fractures; these riots rendered them perceptible. It might have been said: 'Ah! this is broken.' After the Revolution of July, one was sensible only of deliverance; after the riots, one was conscious of a catastrophe.

"All revolt closes the shops, depresses the funds, throws the Exchange into consternation, suspends commerce, clogs business, precipitates failures; no more money, private fortunes rendered uneasy, public credit shaken, industry disconcerted, capital withdrawing, work at a discount, fear everywhere; counter-shocks in every town. Hence gulfs. It has been calculated that the first day of a riot costs France twenty millions, the second day forty, the third sixty, a three days' uprising costs one hundred and twenty millions, that is to say, if only the financial result be taken into consideration, it is equivalent to a disaster, a shipwreck or a lost battle, which should annihilate a fleet of sixty ships of the line.

"No doubt, historically, uprisings have their beauty; the war of the pavements is no less grandiose, and no less pathetic, than the war of thickets: in the one there is the soul of forests, in the other the heart of cities; the one has Jean Chouan, the other has a Jeanne. Revolts have illuminated with a red glare all the most original points of the Parisian character, generosity, devotion, stormy gayety, students proving that bravery forms part of intelligence, the National Guard invincible, bivouacs of shopkeepers, fortresses of street urchins, contempt of death on the part of passers-by. Schools and legions clashed together. After all, between the combatants, there was only a difference

of age; the race is the same; it is the same stoical men who died at the age of twenty for their ideas, at forty for their families. The army, always a sad thing in civil wars, opposed prudence to audacity. Uprisings, while proving popular intrepidity, also educated the courage of the bourgeois.

"This is well. But is all this worth the bloodshed? And to the bloodshed add the future darkness, progress compromised, uneasiness among the best men, honest liberals in despair, foreign absolutism happy in these wounds dealt to revolution by its own hand, the vanquished of 1830 triumphing and saying: 'We told you so!' Add Paris enlarged, possibly, but France most assuredly diminished. Add, for all must needs be told, the massacres which have too often dishonored the victory of order grown ferocious over liberty gone mad. To sum up all, uprisings have been disastrous."

Thus speaks that approximation to wisdom with which the bourgeoisie, that approximation to the people, so willingly contents itself.

For our parts, we reject this word *uprisings* as too large, and consequently as too convenient. We make a distinction between one popular movement and another popular movement. We do not inquire whether an uprising costs as much as a battle. Why a battle, in the first place? Here the question of war comes up. Is war less of a scourge than an uprising is of a calamity? And then, are all uprisings calamities? And what if the revolt of July did cost a hundred and twenty millions? The establishment of Philip V. in Spain cost France two milliards. Even at the same price, we should prefer the 14th of July. However, we reject these figures, which appear to be reasons and which are only words. An uprising being given, we examine it by itself. In all that is said by the doctrinarian objection above presented, there is no question of anything but effect, we seek the cause.

We will be explicit.

II. — THE ROOT OF THE MATTER.

THERE is such a thing as an uprising, and there is such a thing as insurrection; these are two separate phases of wrath; one is in the wrong, the other is in the right. In democratic states, the only ones which are founded on justice, it sometimes happens that the fraction usurps; then the whole rises and the necessary claim of its rights may proceed as far as resort to arms. In all questions which result from collective sovereignty, the war of

the whole against the fraction is insurrection ; the attack of the fraction against the whole is revolt ; according as the Tuileries contain a king or the Convention, they are justly or unjustly attacked. The same cannon, pointed against the populace, is wrong on the 10th of August, and right on the 14th of Vendémiaire. Alike in appearance, fundamentally different in reality ; the Swiss defend the false, Bonaparte defends the true. That which universal suffrage has effected in its liberty and in its sovereignty cannot be undone by the street. It is the same in things pertaining purely to civilization ; the instinct of the masses, clear-sighted to-day, may be troubled to-morrow. The same fury legitimate when directed against Terray and absurd when directed against Turgot. The destruction of machines, the pillage of warehouses, the breaking of rails, the demolition of docks, the false routes of multitudes, the refusal by the people of justice to progress, Ramus assassinated by students, Rousseau driven out of Switzerland and stoned, — that is revolt. Israel against Moses, Athens against Phocian, Rome against Cicero, — that is an uprising ; Paris against the Bastille, — that is insurrection. The soldiers against Alexander, the sailors against Christopher Columbus, — this is the same revolt ; impious revolt ; why ? Because Alexander is doing for Asia with the sword that which Christopher Columbus is doing for America with the compass ; Alexander, like Columbus, is finding a world. These gifts of a world to civilization are such augmentations of light, that all resistance in that case, is culpable. Sometimes the populace counterfeits fidelity to itself. The masses are traitors to the people. Is there, for example, anything stranger than that long and bloody protest of dealers in contraband salt, a legitimate chronic revolt, which, at the decisive moment, on the day of salvation, at the very hour of popular victory, espouses the throne, turns into *chouannerie*, and, from having been an insurrection against, becomes an uprising for, sombre masterpieces of ignorance ! the contraband salt-dealer escapes the royal gibbets, and with a rope's end round his neck, mounts the white cockade. "Death to the salt duties," brings forth, "Long live the King !" The assassins of Saint-Barthélemy, the cut-throats of September, the manslaughterers of Avignon, the assassins of Coligny, the assassins of Madam Lamballe, the assassins of Brune, Miquelets, Verdets, Cadenettes, the companions of Jéhu, the chevaliers of Brassard, — behold an uprising. La Vendée is a grand, catholic uprising. The sound of right in movement is recognizable, it does not always proceed from the trembling of excited masses ; there are mad rages, there are cracked bells,

all tossins do not give out the sound of bronze. The brawl of passions and ignorances is quite another thing from the shock of progress. Show me in what direction you are going. Rise, if you will, but let it be that you may grow great. There is no insurrection except in a forward direction. Any other sort of rising is bad; every violent step towards the rear is a revolt; to retreat is to commit a deed of violence against the human race. Insurrection is a fit of rage on the part of truth; the pavements which the uprising disturbs give forth the spark of right. These pavements bequeath to the uprising only their mud. Danton against Louis XIV. is insurrection; Hébert against Danton is revolt.

Hence it results that if insurrection in given cases may be, as Lafayette says, the most holy of duties, an uprising may be the most fatal of crimes.

There is also a difference in the intensity of heat; insurrection is often a volcano, revolt is often only a fire of straw.

Revolt, as we have said, is sometimes found among those in power. Polignac is a rioter; Camille Desmoulins is one of the governing powers.

Insurrection is sometimes resurrection.

The solution of everything by universal suffrage being an absolutely modern fact, and all history anterior to this fact being, for the space of four thousand years, filled with violated right, and the suffering of peoples, each epoch of history brings with it that protest of which it is capable. Under the Cæsars, there was no insurrection, but there was Juvenal.

The *facit indignatio* replaces the Gracchi.

Under the Cæsars, there is the exile to Syene; there is also the man of the *Annales*. We do not speak of the immense exile of Patmos who, on his part also, overwhelms the real world with a protest in the name of the ideal world, who makes of his vision an enormous satire and casts on Rome-Nineveh, on Rome-Babylon, on Rome-Sodom, the flaming reflection of the Apocalypse. John on his rock is the sphinx on its pedestal; we may understand him, he is a Jew, and it is Hebrew; but the man who writes the *Annales* is of the Latin race, let us rather say he is a Roman.

As the Neros reign in a black way, they should be painted to match. The work of the graving-tool alone would be too pale; there must be poured into the channel a concentrated prose which bites.

Despots count for something in the question of philosophers. A word that is chained is a terrible word. The writer doubles

and trebles his style when silence is imposed on a nation by its master. From this silence there arises a certain mysterious plenitude which filters into thought and there congeals into bronze. The compression of history produces conciseness in the historian. The granite solidity of such and such a celebrated prose is nothing but the accumulation effected by the tyrant.

Tyranny constrains the writer to conditions of diameter which are augmentations of force. The Ciceronian period, which hardly sufficed for Verres, would be blunted on Caligula. The less spread of sail in the phrase, the more intensity in the blow. Tacitus thinks with all his might.

The honesty of a great heart, condensed in justice and truth, overwhelms as with lightning.

Be it remarked, in passing, that Tacitus is not historically superposed upon Cæsar. The Tiberii were reserved for him. Cæsar and Tacitus are two successive phenomena, a meeting between whom seems to be mysteriously avoided, by the One who, when He sets the centuries on the stage, regulates the entrances and the exits. Cæsar is great, Tacitus is great; God spares these two greatnesses by not allowing them to clash with one another. The guardian of justice, in striking Cæsar, might strike too hard and be unjust. God does not will it. The great wars of Africa and Spain, the pirates of Sicily destroyed, civilization introduced into Gaul, into Brittany, into Germany, — all this glory covers the Rubicon. There is here a sort of delicacy of the divine justice, hesitating to let loose upon the illustrious usurper the formidable historian, sparing Cæsar Tacitus, and according extenuating circumstances to genius.

Certainly, despotism remains despotism, even under the despot of genius. There is corruption under all illustrious tyrants, but the moral pest is still more hideous under infamous tyrants. In such reigns, nothing veils the shame; and those who make examples, Tacitus as well as Juvenal, slap this ignominy which cannot reply, in the face, more usefully in the presence of all humanity.

Rome smells worse under Vitellius than under Sylla. Under Claudius and under Domitian, there is a deformity of baseness corresponding to the repulsiveness of the tyrant. The villany of slaves is a direct product of the despot; a miasma exhales from these cowering consciences wherein the master is reflected; public powers are unclean; hearts are small; consciences are dull, souls are like vermin; thus it is under Caracalla, thus it is under Commodus, thus it is under Heliogabalus, while, from the

Roman Senate, under Cæsar, there comes nothing but the odor of the dung which is peculiar to the eyries of the eagles.

Hence the advent, apparently tardy, of the Tacituses and the Juvenals; it is in the hour for evidence, that the demonstrator makes his appearance.

But Juvenal and Tacitus, like Isaiah in Biblical times, like Dante in the Middle Ages, is man; riot and insurrection are the multitude, which is sometimes right and sometimes wrong.

In the majority of cases, riot proceeds from a material fact; insurrection is always a moral phenomenon. Riot is Masaniello; insurrection, Spartacus. Insurrection borders on mind, riot on the stomach; Gaster grows irritated; but Gaster, assuredly, is not always in the wrong. In questions of famine, riot, Buzançais, for example, holds a true, pathetic, and just point of departure. Nevertheless, it remains a riot. Why? It is because, right at bottom, it was wrong in form. Shy although in the right, violent although strong, it struck at random; it walked like a blind elephant; it left behind it the corpses of old men, of women, and of children; it wished the blood of inoffensive and innocent persons without knowing why. The nourishment of the people is a good object; to massacre them is a bad means.

All armed protests, even the most legitimate, even that of the 10th of August, even that of July 14th, begin with the same troubles. Before the right gets set free, there is foam and tumult. In the beginning, the insurrection is a riot, just as a river is a torrent. Ordinarily it ends in that ocean: revolution. Sometimes, however, coming from those lofty mountains which dominate the moral horizon, justice, wisdom, reason, right, formed of the pure snow of the ideal, after a long fall from rock to rock, after having reflected the sky in its transparency and increased by a hundred affluents in the majestic mien of triumph, insurrection is suddenly lost in some quagmire, as the Rhine is in a swamp.

All this is of the past, the future is another thing. Universal suffrage has this admirable property, that it dissolves riot in its inception, and, by giving the vote to insurrection, it deprives it of its arms. The disappearance of wars, of street wars as well as of wars on the frontiers, such is the inevitable progression. Whatever To-day may be, To-morrow will be peace.

However, insurrection, riot, and points of difference between the former and the latter, — the bourgeois, properly speaking, knows nothing of such shades. In his mind, all is sedition, rebellion pure and simple, the revolt of the dog against his mas-

ter, an attempt to bite whom must be punished by the chain and the kennel, barking, snapping, until such day as the head of the dog, suddenly enlarged, is outlined vaguely in the gloom face to face with the lion.

Then the bourgeois shouts: "Long live the people!"

This explanation given, what does the movement of June, 1832, signify, so far as history is concerned? Is it a revolt? Is it an insurrection?

It may happen to us, in placing this formidable event on the stage, to say revolt now and then, but merely to distinguish superficial facts, and always preserving the distinction between revolt, the form, and insurrection, the foundation.

This movement of 1832 had, in its rapid outbreak and in its melancholy extinction, so much grandeur, that even those who see in it only an uprising, never refer to it otherwise than with respect. For them, it is like a relic of 1830. Excited imaginations, say they, are not to be calmed in a day. A revolution cannot be cut off short. It must needs undergo some undulations before it returns to a state of rest, like a mountain sinking into the plain. There are no Alps without their Jura, nor Pyrenees without the Asturias.

This pathetic crisis of contemporary history which the memory of Parisians calls "the epoch of the riots," is certainly a characteristic hour amid the stormy hours of this century. A last word, before we enter on the recital.

The facts which we are about to relate belong to that dramatic and living reality, which the historian sometimes neglects for lack of time and space. There, nevertheless, we insist upon it, is life, palpitation, human tremor. Petty details, as we think we have already said, are, so to speak, the foliage of great events, and are lost in the distance of history. The epoch, sur-named "of the riots," abounds in details of this nature. Judicial inquiries have not revealed, and perhaps have not sounded, the depths, for another reason than history. We shall therefore bring to light, among the known and published peculiarities, things which have not heretofore been known, about facts over which have passed the forgetfulness of some, and the death of others. The majority of the actors in these gigantic scenes have disappeared; beginning with the very next day they held their peace; but of what we shall relate, we shall be able to say: "We have seen this." We alter a few names, for history relates and does not inform against, but the deed which we shall paint will be genuine. In accordance with the conditions of the book which we are now writing, we shall show only one side

and one episode, and certainly, the least known at that, of the two days, the 5th and the 6th of June, 1832, but we shall do it in such wise that the reader may catch a glimpse, beneath the gloomy veil which we are about to lift, of the real form of this frightful public adventure.

III. — A BURIAL ; AN OCCASION TO BE BORN AGAIN.

IN the spring of 1832, although the cholera had been chilling all minds for the last three months and had cast over their agitation an indescribable and gloomy pacification, Paris had already long been ripe for commotion. As we have said, the great city resembles a piece of artillery ; when it is loaded, it suffices for a spark to fall, and the shot is discharged. In June, 1832, the spark was the death of General Lamarque.

Lamarque was a man of renown and of action. He had had in succession, under the Empire and under the Restoration, the sorts of bravery requisite for the two epochs, the bravery of the battle-field and the bravery of the tribune. He was as eloquent as he had been valiant ; a sword was discernible in his speech. Like Foy, his predecessor, after upholding the command, he upheld liberty ; he sat between the left and the extreme left, beloved of the people because he accepted the chances of the future, beloved of the populace because he had served the Emperor well ; he was, in company with Comtes Gérard and Drouet, one of Napoleon's marshals *in petto*. The treaties of 1815 removed him as a personal offence. He hated Wellington with a downright hatred which pleased the multitude ; and, for seventeen years, he majestically preserved the sadness of Waterloo, paying hardly any attention to intervening events. In his death agony, at his last hour, he clasped to his breast a sword which had been presented to him by the officers of the Hundred Days. Napoleon had died uttering the word *army*, Lamarque uttering the word *country*.

His death, which was expected, was dreaded by the people as a loss, and by the government as an occasion. This death was an affliction. Like everything that is bitter, affliction may turn to revolt. This is what took place.

On the preceding evening, and on the morning of the 5th of June, the day appointed for Lamarque's burial, the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, which the procession was to touch at, assumed a formidable aspect. This tumultuous network of streets was filled with rumors. They armed themselves as best they might. Joiners carried off door-weights of their establishment "to

break down doors." One of them had made himself a dagger of a stocking-weaver's hook by breaking off the hook and sharpening the stump. Another, who was in a fever "to attack," slept wholly dressed for three days. A carpenter named Lombier met a comrade, who asked him: "Whither are you going?" "Eh! well, I have no weapons." "What then?" "I'm going to my timber-yard to get my compasses." "What for?" "I don't know," said Lombier. A certain Jacqueline, an expeditious man, accosted some passing artisans: "Come here, you!" He treated them to ten sous' worth of wine and said: "Have you work?" "No." "Go to Filspierre, between the Barrière Charonne and the Barrière Montreuil, and you will find work." At Filspierre's they found cartridges and arms. Certain well-known leaders were going the rounds, that is to say, running from one house to another, to collect their men. At Barthélemy's, near the Barrière du Trône, at Capel's, near the Petit-Chapeau, the drinkers accosted each other with a grave air. They were heard to say: "Have you your pistol?" "Under my blouse." "And you?" "Under my shirt." In the Rue Traversière, in front of the Bland workshop, and in the yard of the Maison-Brulée, in front of tool-maker Bernier's, groups whispered together. Among them was observed a certain Mavot, who never remained more than a week in one shop, as the masters always discharged him "because they were obliged to dispute with him every day." Mavot was killed on the following day at the barricade of the Rue Ménilmontant. Pretot, who was destined to perish also in the struggle, seconded Mavot, and to the question: "What is your object?" he replied: "*Insurrection.*" Workmen assembled at the corner of the Rue de Bercy, waited for a certain Lemarin, the revolutionary agent for the Faubourg Saint-Marceau. Watch-words were exchanged almost publicly.

On the 5th of June, accordingly, a day of mingled rain and sun, General Lamarque's funeral procession traversed Paris with official military pomp, somewhat augmented through precaution. Two battalions, with draped drums and reversed arms, ten thousand National Guards, with their swords at their sides, escorted the coffin. The hearse was drawn by young men. The officers of the Invalides came immediately behind it, bearing laurel branches. Then came an innumerable, strange, agitated multitude, the sectionaries of the Friends of the People, the Law School, the Medical School, refugees of all nationalities, and Spanish, Italian, German, and Polish flags, tricolored horizontal banners, every possible sort of banner, children waving green

boughs, stone-cutters and carpenters who were on strike at the moment, printers who were recognizable by their paper caps, marching two by two, three by three, uttering cries, nearly all of them brandishing sticks, some brandishing sabres, without order and yet with a single soul, now a tumultuous rout, again a column. Squads chose themselves leaders; a man armed with a pair of pistols in full view, seemed to pass the host in review, and the files separated before him. On the side alleys of the boulevards, in the branches of the trees, on balconies, in windows, on the roofs, swarmed the heads of men, women, and children; all eyes were filled with anxiety. An armed throng was passing, and a terrified throng looked on.

The Government, on its side, was taking observations. It observed with its hand on its sword. Four squadrons of carabiniers could be seen in the Place Louis XV. in their saddles, with their trumpets at their head, cartridge-boxes filled and muskets loaded, all in readiness to march; in the Latin country and at the Jardin des Plantes, the Municipal Guard echeloned from street to street; at the Halle-aux-Vins, a squadron of dragoons; at the Grève half of the 12th Light Infantry, the other half being at the Bastille; the 6th Dragoons at the Célestins; and the courtyard of the Louvre full of artillery. The remainder of the troops were confined to their barracks, without reckoning the regiments of the environs of Paris. Power being uneasy, held suspended over the menacing multitude twenty-four thousand soldiers in the city and thirty thousand in the banlieue.

Divers reports were in circulation in the cortège. Legitimist tricks were hinted at; they spoke of the Duc de Reichstadt, whom God had marked out for death at that very moment when the populace were designating him for the Empire. One personage, whose name has remained unknown, announced that at a given hour two overseers who had been won over, would throw open the doors of a factory of arms to the people. That which predominated on the uncovered brows of the majority of those present was enthusiasm mingled with dejection. Here and there, also, in that multitude given over to such violent but noble emotions, there were visible genuine visages of criminals and ignoble mouths which said: "Let us plunder!" There are certain agitations which stir up the bottoms of marshes and make clouds of mud rise through the water. A phenomenon to which "well drilled" policemen are no strangers.

The procession proceeded, with feverish slowness, from the house of the deceased, by way of the boulevards as far as the Bastille. It rained from time to time; the rain mattered nothing

to that throng. Many incidents, the coffin borne round the Vendôme column, stones thrown at the Duc de Fitz-James, who was seen on a balcony with his hat on his head, the Gallic cock torn from a popular flag and dragged in the mire, a policeman wounded with a blow from a sword at the Porte Saint-Martin, an officer of the 12th Light Infantry saying aloud: "I am a Republican," the Polytechnic School coming up unexpectedly against orders to remain at home, the shouts of: "Long live the Polytechnique! Long live the Republic!" marked the passage of the funeral train. At the Bastille, long files of curious and formidable people who descended from the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, effected a junction with the procession, and a certain terrible seething began to agitate the throng.

One man was heard to say to another: "Do you see that fellow with a red beard, he's the one who will give the word when we are to fire." It appears that this red beard was present, at another riot, the Quénisset affair, entrusted with this same function.

The hearse passed the Bastille, traversed the small bridge, and reached the esplanade of the bridge of Austerlitz. There it halted. The crowd, surveyed at that moment with a bird's-eye view, would have presented the aspect of a comet whose head was on the esplanade and whose tail spread out over the Quai Bourdon, covered the Bastille, and was prolonged on the boulevard as far as the Porte Saint-Martin. A circle was traced around the hearse. The vast rout held their peace. Lafayette spoke and bade Lamarque farewell. This was a touching and august instant, all heads uncovered, all hearts beat high.

All at once, a man on horseback, clad in black, made his appearance in the middle of the group with a red flag, others say, with a pike surmounted with a red liberty-cap. Lafayette turned aside his head. Exelmans quitted the procession.

This red flag raised a storm, and disappeared in the midst of it. From the Boulevard Bourdon to the bridge of Austerlitz one of those clamors which resemble billows stirred the multitude. Two prodigious shouts went up: "Lamarque to the Pantheon!—Lafayette to the Town-hall!" Some young men, amid the acclamations of the throng, harnessed themselves and began to drag Lamarque in the hearse across the bridge of Austerlitz and Lafayette in a hackney-coach along the Quai Morland.

In the crowd which surrounded and cheered Lafayette, it was noticed that a German showed himself named Ludwig Snyder, who died a centenarian afterwards, who had also been in the

war of 1776, and who had fought at Trenton under Washington, and at Brandywine under Lafayette.

In the meantime, the municipal cavalry on the left bank had been set in motion, and came to bar the bridge, on the right bank the dragoons emerged from the Célestins and deployed along the Quai Morland. The men who were dragging Lafayette suddenly caught sight of them at the corner of the quay and shouted: "The dragoons!" The dragoons advanced at a walk, in silence, with their pistols in their holsters, their swords in their scabbards, their guns slung in their leather sockets, with an air of gloomy expectation.

They halted two hundred paces from the little bridge. The carriage in which sat Lafayette advanced to them, their ranks opened and allowed it to pass, and then closed behind it. At that moment the dragoons and the crowd touched. The women fled in terror. What took place during that fatal minute? No one can say. It is the dark moment when two clouds come together. Some declare that a blast of trumpets sounding the charge was heard in the direction of the Arsenal, others that a blow from a dagger was given by a child to a dragoon. The fact is, that three shots were suddenly discharged: the first killed Cholet, chief of the squadron, the second killed an old deaf woman who was in the act of closing her window, the third singed the shoulder of an officer; a woman screamed: "They are beginning too soon!" and all at once, a squadron of dragoons which had remained in the barracks up to this time, was seen to debouch at a gallop with bared swords, through the Rue Bassompierre and the Boulevard Bourdon, sweeping all before them.

Then all is said, the tempest is loosed, stones rain down, a fusillade breaks forth, many precipitate themselves to the bottom of the bank, and pass the small arm of the Seine, now filled in, the timber-yards of the Isle Louviers, that vast citadel ready to hand, bristle with combatants, stakes are torn up, pistol-shots fired, a barricade begun, the young men who are thrust back pass the Austerlitz bridge with the hearse at a run, and the municipal guard, the carabineers rush up, the dragoons ply their swords, the crowd disperses in all directions, a rumor of war flies to all four quarters of Paris, men shout: "To arms!" they run, tumble down, flee, resist. Wrath spreads abroad the riot as wind spreads a fire.

IV.—THE EBULLITIONS OF FORMER DAYS.

NOTHING is more extraordinary than the first breaking out of a riot. Everything bursts forth everywhere at once. Was it foreseen? Yes. Was it prepared? No. Whence comes it? From the pavements. Whence falls it? From the clouds. Here insurrection assumes the character of a plot; there of an improvisation. The first comer seizes a current of the throng and leads it whither he wills. A beginning full of terror, in which is mingled a sort of formidable gayety. First come clamors, the shops are closed, the displays of the merchants disappear; then come isolated shots; people flee; blows from gun-stocks beat against portes cochères, servants can be heard laughing in the courtyards of houses and saying: "There's going to be a row!"

A quarter of an hour had not elapsed when this is what was taking place at twenty different spots in Paris at once.

In the Rue Sainte-Croix-de-la-Bretonnerie, twenty young men, bearded and with long hair, entered a dram-shop and emerged a moment later, carrying a horizontal tricolored flag covered with crape, and having at their head three men armed, one with a sword, one with a gun, and the third with a pike.

In the Rue des Nonaindières, a very well-dressed bourgeois, who had a prominent belly, a sonorous voice, a bald head, a lofty brow, a black beard, and one of these stiff mustaches which will not lie flat, offered cartridges publicly to passers-by.

In the Rue Saint-Pierre-Montmartre, men with bare arms carried about a black flag, on which could be read in white letters this inscription: "Republic or Death!" In the Rue des Jeûneurs, Rue du Cadran, Rue Montorgueil, Rue Mandar, groups appeared waving flags on which could be distinguished in gold letters, the word *section* with a number. One of these flags was red and blue with an almost imperceptible stripe of white between.

They pillaged a factory of small-arms on the Boulevard Saint-Martin, and three armorers' shops, the first in the Rue Beaubourg, the second in the Rue Michel-le-Comte, the other in the Rue du Temple. In a few minutes, the thousand hands of the crowd had seized and carried off two hundred and thirty guns, nearly all doubled-barrelled, sixty-four swords, and eighty-three pistols. In order to provide more arms, one man took the gun, the other the bayonet.

Opposite the Quai de la Grève, young men armed with mus

kets installed themselves in the houses of some women for the purpose of firing. One of them had a flint-lock. They rang, entered, and set about making cartridges. One of these women relates: "I did not know what cartridges were; it was my husband who told me."

One cluster broke into a curiosity shop in the Rue des Vieilles Haudriettes, and seized yataghans and Turkish arms.

The body of a mason who had been killed by a gun-shot lay in the Rue de la Perle.

And then, on the right bank, the left bank, on the quays, on the boulevards, in the Latin country, in the quarter of the Halles, panting men, artisans, students, members of sections read proclamations and shouted: "To arms!" broke street lanterns, unharnessed carriages, unpaved the streets, broke in the doors of houses, uprooted trees, rummaged cellars, rolled out hogsheads, heaped up paving-stones, rough slabs, furniture and planks, and made barricades.

They forced the bourgeois to assist them in this. They entered the dwellings of women, they forced them to hand over the swords and guns of their absent husbands, and they wrote on the door, with whiting: "The arms have been delivered"; some signed "their names" to receipts for the guns and swords, and said: "Send for them to-morrow at the Mayor's office." They disarmed isolated sentinels and National Guardsmen in the streets on their way to the Town-hall. They tore the epaulets from officers. In the Rue du Cimetière-Saint-Nicholas, an officer of the National Guard, on being pursued by a crowd armed with clubs and foils, took refuge with difficulty in a house, whence he was only able to emerge at nightfall and in disguise.

In the Quartier Saint-Jacques, the students swarmed out of their hotels and ascended the Rue Saint-Hyacinthe to the Café du Progrès, or descended to the Café des Sept-Billards, in the Rue des Mathurins. There, in front of the door, young men mounted on the stone corner-posts, distributed arms. They plundered the timber-yard in the Rue Transnonain in order to obtain material for barricades. On a single point the inhabitants resisted, at the corner of the Rue Sainte-Avoye and the Rue Simon-Le-Franc, where they destroyed the barricade with their own hands. At a single point the insurgents yielded; they abandoned a barricade begun in the Rue de Temple after having fired on a detachment of the National Guard, and fled through the Rue de la Corderie. The detachment picked up in the barricade a red flag, a package of cartridges, and three

hundred pistol-balls. The National Guardsmen tore up the flag, and carried off its tattered remains on the points of their bayonets.

All that we are here relating slowly and successively took place simultaneously at all points of the city in the midst of a vast tumult, like a mass of tongues of lightning in one clap of thunder. In less than an hour, twenty-seven barricades sprang out of the earth in the quarter of the Halles alone. In the centre was that famous house No. 50, which was the fortress of Jeanne and her six hundred companions, and which, flanked on the one hand by a barricade at Saint-Merry, and on the other by the barricade of the Rue Maubuée, commanded three streets, the Rue des Arcis, the Rue Saint-Martin, and the Rue Aubry-le-Boucher, which it faced. The barricades at right angles fell back, the one of the Rue Montorgueil on the Grande-Truanderie, the other of the Rue Geoffroy-Langevin on the Rue Sainte-Avoye. Without reckoning innumerable barricades in twenty other quarters of Paris, in the Marais, at Mont-Sainte-Geneviève; one in the Rue Ménéilmontant, where was visible a porte cochère torn from its hinges; another near the little bridge of the Hôtel-Dieu made with an "écossais," which had been unharnessed and overthrown, three hundred paces from the Prefecture of Police.

At the barricade of the Rue des Ménétriers, a well-dressed man distributed money to the workmen. At the barricade of the Rue Grenetat, a horseman made his appearance and handed to the one who seemed to be the commander of the barricade what had the appearance of a roll of silver. "Here," said he, "this is to pay expenses, wine, et cætera." A light-haired young man, without a cravat, went from barricade to barricade, carrying pass-words. Another, with a naked sword, a blue police cap on his head, placed sentinels. In the interior, beyond the barricades, the wine-shops and porters' lodges were converted into guard-houses. Otherwise the riot was conducted after the most scientific military tactics. The narrow, uneven, sinuous streets, full of angles and turns, were admirably chosen; the neighborhood of the Halles, in particular, a network of streets more intricate than a forest. The Society of the Friends of the People had, it was said, undertaken to direct the insurrection in the Quartier Sainte-Avoye. A man killed in the Rue du Ponceau who was searched had on his person a plan of Paris.

That which had really undertaken the direction of the uprising was a sort of strange impetuosity which was in the air. The insurrection had abruptly built barricades with one hand.

and with the other seized nearly all the posts of the garrison. In less than three hours, like a train of powder catching fire, the insurgents had invaded and occupied, on the right bank, the Arsenal, the Mayoralty of the Place Royale, the whole of the Marais, the Popincourt arms manufactory, la Galiote, the Château-d'Eau, and all the streets near the Halles; on the left bank, the barracks of the Veterans, Sainte-Pélagie, the Place Maubert, the powder magazine of the Deux-Moulins, and all the barriers. At five o'clock in the evening, they were masters of the Bastille, of the Lingerie, of the Blancs-Manteaux; their scouts had reached the Place des Victoires, and menaced the Bank, the Petits-Pères barracks, and the Post-Office. A third of Paris was in the hands of the rioters.

The conflict had been begun on a gigantic scale at all points; and, as a result of the disarming, domiciliary visits, and armorers' shops hastily invaded, was, that the combat which had begun with the throwing of stones was continued with gunshots.

About six o'clock in the evening, the Passage du Saumon became the field of battle. The uprising was at one end, the troops were at the other. They fired from one gate to the other. An observer, a dreamer, the author of this book, who had gone to get a near view of this volcano, found himself in the passage between the two fires. All that he had to protect him from the bullets was the swell of the two half-columns which separate the shops; he remained in this delicate situation for nearly half an hour.

Meanwhile the call to arms was beaten, the National Guard armed in haste, the legions emerged from the Mayoralities, the regiments from their barracks. Opposite the passage de l'Ancre a drummer received a blow from a dagger. Another, in the Rue du Cygne, was assailed by thirty young men who broke his instrument, and took away his sword. Another was killed in the Rue Grenier-Saint-Lazare. In the Rue Michel-le-Comte, three officers fell dead one after the other. Many of the Municipal Guards, on being wounded, in the Rue des Lombards, retreated.

In front of the Cour-Batave, a detachment of National Guards found a red flag bearing the following inscription: *Republican revolution, No. 127*. Was this a revolution, in fact?

The insurrection had made of the centre of Paris a sort of inextricable, tortuous, colossal citadel.

There was the hearth; there, evidently, was the question. All the rest was nothing but skirmishes. The proof that all would

be decided there lay in the fact that there was no fighting going on there as yet.

In some regiments, the soldiers were uncertain, which added to the fearful uncertainty of the crisis. They recalled the popular ovation which had greeted the neutrality of the 53d of the Line in July, 1830. Two intrepid men, tried in great wars, the Marshal Lobau and General Bugeaud, were in command, Bugeaud under Lobau. Enormous patrols, composed of battalions of the Line, enclosed in entire companies of the National Guard, and preceded by a commissary of police wearing his scarf of office, went to reconnoitre the streets in rebellion. The insurgents, on their side, placed videttes at the corners of all open spaces, and audaciously sent their patrols outside the barricades. Each side was watching the other. The Government, with an army in its hand, hesitated; the night was almost upon them, and the Saint-Merry tocsin began to make itself heard. The Minister of War at that time, Marshal Soult, who had seen Austerlitz, regarded this with a gloomy air.

These old sailors, accustomed to correct manœuvres and having as resource and guide only tactics, that compass of battles, are utterly disconcerted in the presence of that immense foam which is called public wrath.

The National Guards of the suburbs rushed up in haste and disorder. A battalion of the 12th Light came at a run from Saint-Denis, the 14th of the Line arrived from Courbevoie, the batteries of the Military School had taken up their position on the Carrousel; cannons were descending from Vincennes.

Solitude was formed around the Tuileries. Louis Philippe was perfectly serene.

V. — ORIGINALITY OF PARIS.

DURING the last two years, as we have said, Paris had witnessed more than one insurrection. Nothing is, generally, more singularly calm than the physiognomy of Paris during an uprising beyond the bounds of the rebellious quarters. Paris very speedily accustoms herself to anything,—it is only a riot,—and Paris has so many affairs on hand, that she does not put herself out for so small a matter. These colossal cities alone can offer such spectacles. These immense enclosures alone can contain at the same time civil war and an odd and indescribable tranquillity. Ordinarily, when an insurrection commences,

when the shop-keeper hears the drum, the call to arms, the general alarm, he contents himself with the remark : —

“ There appears to be a squabble in the Rue Saint-Martin.”

Or : —

“ In the Faubourg Saint-Antoine.”

Often he adds carelessly : —

“ Or somewhere in that direction.”

Later on, when the heart-rending and mournful hubbub of musketry and firing by platoons becomes audible, the shop-keeper says : —

“ It's getting hot ! Hullo, it's getting hot ! ”

A moment later, the riot approaches and gains in force, he shuts up his shop precipitately, hastily dons his uniform, that is to say, he places his merchandise in safety and risks his own person.

Men fire in a square, in a passage, in a blind alley ; they take and re-take the barricade ; blood flows, the grape-shot riddles the fronts of the houses, the balls kill people in their beds, corpses encumber the streets. A few streets away, the shock of billiard-balls can be heard in the cafés.

The theatres open their doors and present vaudevilles ; the curious laugh and chat a couple of paces distant from these streets filled with war. Hackney-carriages go their way ; passers-by are going to a dinner somewhere in town. Sometimes in the very quarter where the fighting is going on.

In 1831, a fusillade was stopped to allow a wedding-party to pass.

At the time of the insurrection of 1839, in the Rue Saint-Martin, a little, infirm old man, pushing a hand-cart surmounted by a tricolored rag, in which he had carafes filled with some sort of liquid, went and came from barricade to troops and from troops to the barricade, offering his glasses of cocoa impartially, — now to the Government, now to anarchy.

Nothing can be stranger ; and this is the peculiar character of uprisings in Paris, which cannot be found in any other capital. To this end, two things are requisite, the size of Paris and its gayety. The city of Voltaire and Napoleon is necessary.

On this occasion, however, in the resort to arms of June 25th, 1832, the great city felt something which was, perhaps, stronger than itself. It was afraid.

Closed doors, windows, and shutters were to be seen everywhere, in the most distant and most “ disinterested ” quarters. The courageous took to arms, the poltroons hid. The busy and

heedless passer-by disappeared. Many streets were empty at four o'clock in the morning.

Alarming details were hawked about, fatal news was disseminated,—that *they* were masters of the Bank;—that there were six hundred of them in the Cloister of Saint-Merry alone, entrenched and embattled in the church; that the line was not to be depended on; that Armand Carrel had been to see Marshal Clausel and that the Marshal had said: “Get a regiment first”; that Lafayette was ill, but that he had said to them, nevertheless: “I am with you. I will follow you wherever there is room for a chair”; that one must be on one’s guard; that at night there would be people pillaging isolated dwellings in the deserted corners of Paris (there the imagination of the police, that Anne Radcliffe mixed up with the Government was recognizable); that a battery had been established in the Rue Aubry le Boucher; that Lobau and Bugeaud were putting their heads together, and that, at midnight, or at day-break at latest, four columns would march simultaneously on the centre of the uprising, the first coming from the Bastille, the second from the Porte Saint-Martin, the third from the Grève, the fourth from the Halles; that perhaps, also, the troops would evacuate Paris and withdraw to the Champ-de-Mars; that no one knew what would happen, but that this time, it certainly was serious.

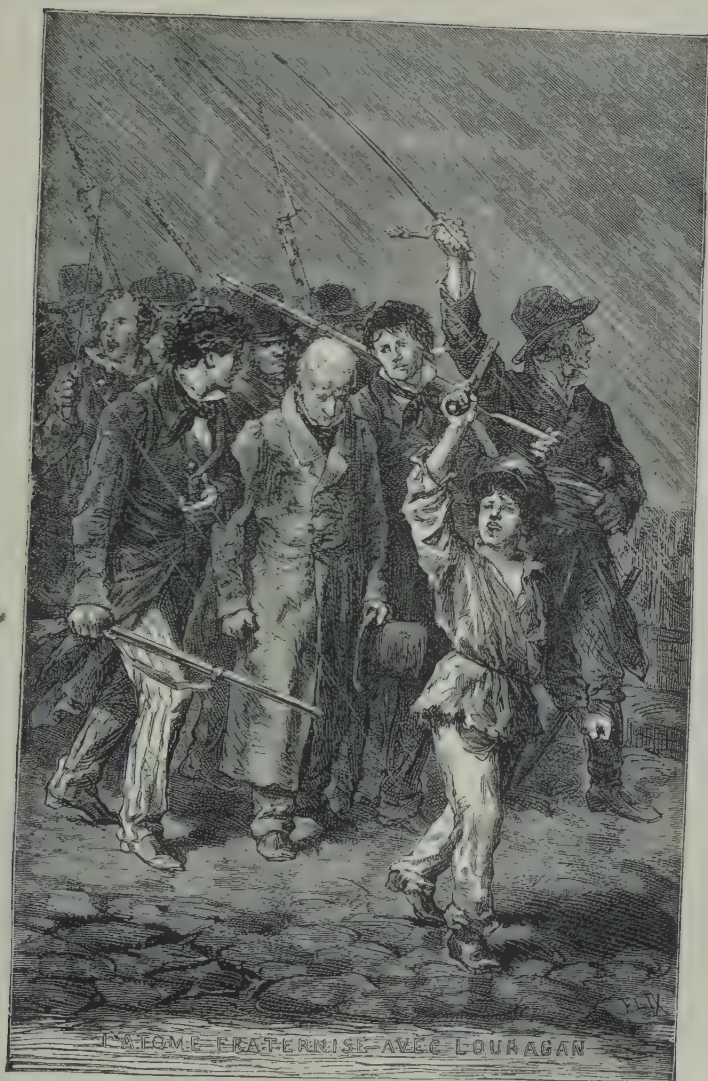
People busied themselves over Marshal Soult’s hesitations. Why did not he attack at once? It is certain that he was profoundly absorbed. The old lion seemed to scent an unknown monster in that gloom.

Evening came, the theatres did not open; the patrols circulated with an air of irritation; passers-by were searched; suspicious persons were arrested. By nine o’clock, more than eight hundred persons had been arrested, the Prefecture of Police was encumbered with them, so was the Conciergerie, so was La Force.

At the Conciergerie in particular, the long vault which is called the Rue de Paris was littered with trusses of straw upon which lay a heap of prisoners, whom the man of Lyons, Lagrange, harangued valiantly. All that straw rustled by all these men, produced the sound of a heavy shower. Elsewhere prisoners slept in the open air in the meadows, piled on top of each other.

Anxiety reigned everywhere, and a certain tremor which was not habitual with Paris.

People barricaded themselves in their houses; wives and



THE ATOM FRATERNIZES WITH THE HURRICANE.

mothers were uneasy ; nothing was to be heard but this : “ Ah ! my God ! He has not come home ! ” There was hardly even the distant rumble of a vehicle to be heard.

People listened on their thresholds, to the rumors, the shouts, the tumult, the dull and indistinct sounds, to the things that were said : “ It is cavalry,” or : “ Those are the caissons galloping,” to the trumpets, the drums, the firing, and, above all, to that lamentable alarm peal from Saint-Merry.

They waited for the first cannon-shot. Men sprang up at the corners of the streets and disappeared, shouting : “ Go home ! ” And people made haste to bolt their doors. They said : “ How will all this end ? ” From moment to moment, in proportion as the darkness descended, Paris seemed to take on a more mournful hue from the formidable flaming of the revolt.



BOOK ELEVENTH. — THE ATOM FRATERNIZES WITH THE HURRICANE.

I. — SOME EXPLANATIONS WITH REGARD TO THE ORIGIN OF GAVROCHE'S POETRY. THE INFLUENCE OF AN ACADEMICIAN ON THIS POETRY.

At the instant when the insurrection, arising from the shock of the populace and the military in front of the Arsenal, started a movement in advance and towards the rear in the multitude which was following the hearse and which, through the whole length of the boulevards, weighed, so to speak, on the head of the procession, there arose a frightful ebb. The rout was shaken, their ranks were broken, all ran, fled, made their escape, some with shouts of attack, others with the pallor of flight. The great river which covered the boulevards divided in a twinkling, overflowed to right and left, and spread in torrents over two hundred streets at once with the roar of a sewer that has broken loose.

At that moment, a ragged child who was coming down through the Rue Ménilmontant, holding in his hand a branch of blossoming laburnum which he had just plucked on the heights of Belleville, caught sight of an old holster-pistol in the show-window of a bric-à-brac merchant's shop.

“ Mother What's-your-name, I'm going to borrow your machine,”

And off he ran with the pistol.

Two minutes later, a flood of frightened bourgeois who were fleeing through the Rue Amelot and the Rue Basse, encountered the lad brandishing his pistol and singing: —

La nuit on ne voit rien,
Le jour on voit très bien,
D'un écrit apocryphe
Le bourgeois s'ébouriffe,
Pratiquez la vertu,
Tutu, chapeau pointu!¹

It was little Gavroche on his way to the wars.

On the boulevard he noticed that the pistol had no trigger.

Who was the author of that couplet which served to punctuate his march, and of all the other songs which he was fond of singing on occasion? We know not. Who does know? Himself, perhaps. However, Gavroche was well up in all the popular tunes in circulation, and he mingled with them his own chirpings. An observing urchin and a rogue, he made a pot-pourri of the voices of nature and the voices of Paris. He combined the repertory of the birds with the repertory of the workshops. He was acquainted with thieves, a tribe contiguous to his own. He had, it appears, been for three months apprenticed to a printer. He had one day executed a commission for M. Baour-Lormian, one of the Forty. Gavroche was a gamin of letters.

Moreover, Gavroche had no suspicion of the fact that when he had offered the hospitality of his elephant to two brats on that villanously rainy night, it was to his own brothers that he had played the part of Providence. His brothers in the evening, his father in the morning; that is what his night had been like. On quitting the Rue des Ballets at daybreak, he had returned in haste to the elephant, had artistically extracted from it the two brats, had shared with them some sort of breakfast which he had invented, and had then gone away, confiding them to that good mother, the street, who had brought him up, almost entirely. On leaving them, he had appointed to meet them at the same spot in the evening, and had left them this discourse by way of a farewell: "I break a cane, otherwise expressed, I cut my stick, or, as they say at the court, I file off. If you don't find papa and mamma, young 'uns, come back here this evening. I'll scramble you up some supper, and I'll give you a shakedown." The two children, picked up by some policeman and placed in the refuge, or stolen by some mountebank,

¹ At night one sees nothing, by day one sees very well; the bourgeois gets flurried over an apocryphal scrawl, practice virtue, tutu, pointed hat!

or having simply strayed off in that immense Chinese puzzle of a Paris, did not return. The lowest depths of the actual social world are full of these lost traces. Gavroche did not see them again. Ten or twelve weeks had elapsed since that night. More than once he had scratched the back of his head and said: "Where the devil are my two children?"

In the meantime, he had arrived, pistol in hand, in the Rue du Pont-aux-Choux. He noticed that there was but one shop open in that street, and, a matter worthy of reflection, that was a pastry-cook's shop. This presented a providential occasion to eat another apple-turnover before entering the unknown. Gavroche halted, fumbled in his fob, turned his pocket inside out, found nothing, not even a sou, and began to shout: "Help!"

It is hard to miss the last cake.

Nevertheless, Gavroche pursued his way.

Two minutes later, he was in the Rue Saint-Louis. While traversing the Rue du Parc-Royal, he felt called upon to make good the loss of the apple-turnover which had been impossible, and he indulged himself in the immense delight of tearing down the theatre posters in broad daylight.

A little further on, on catching sight of a group of comfortable-looking persons, who seemed to be landed proprietors, he shrugged his shoulders and spit out at random before him this mouthful of philosophical bile as they passed:

"How fat those moneyed men are! They're drunk! They just wallow in good dinners. Ask 'em what they do with their money. They don't know. They eat it, that's what they do! As much as their bellies will hold."

II. — GAVROCHE ON THE MARCH.

THE brandishing of a triggerless pistol, grasped in one's hand in the open street, is so much of a public function that Gavroche felt his fervor increasing with every moment. Amid the scraps of the Marseillaise which he was singing, he shouted:—

"All goes well. I suffer a great deal in my left paw, I'm all broken up with rheumatism, but I'm satisfied, citizens. All that the bourgeois have to do is to bear themselves well, I'll sneeze them out subversive couplets. What are the police spies? Dogs. And I'd just like to have one of them at the end of my pistol. I'm just from the boulevard, my friends. It's getting hot there, it's getting into a little boil, it's simmering. It's time to skim the pot. Forward march, men! Let an im-

pure blood inundate the furrows! I give my days to my country, I shall never see my concubine more, Nini, finished, yes, Nini? But never mind! Long live joy! Let's fight, crebleu! I've had enough of despotism."

At that moment, the horse of a lancer of the National Guard having fallen, Gavroche laid his pistol on the pavement, and picked up the man, then he assisted in raising the horse. After which he picked up his pistol and resumed his way. In the Rue de Thorigny, all was peace and silence. This apathy, peculiar to the Marais, presented a contrast with the vast surrounding uproar. Four gossips were chatting in a doorway.

Scotland has trios of witches, Paris has quartettes of old gossiping hags; and the "Thou shalt be King" could be quite as mournfully hurled at Bonaparte in the Carrefour Baudoyer as at Macbeth on the heath of Armuyr. The croak would be almost identical.

The gossips of the Rue de Thorigny busied themselves only with their own concerns. Three of them were portresses, and the fourth was a rag-picker with her basket on her back.

All four of them seemed to be standing at the four corners of old age, which are decrepitude, decay, ruin, and sadness.

The rag-picker was humble. In this open-air society, it is the rag-picker who salutes and the portress who patronizes. This is caused by the corner for refuse, which is fat or lean, according to the will of the portresses, and after the fancy of the one who makes the heap. There may be kindness in the broom.

This rag-picker was a grateful creature, and she smiled, with what a smile! on the three portresses. Things of this nature were said:—

"Ah, by the way, is your cat still cross?"

"Good gracious, cats are naturally the enemies of dogs, you know. It's the dogs who complain."

"And people also."

"But the fleas from a cat don't go after people."

"That's not the trouble, dogs are dangerous. I remember one year when there were so many dogs that it was necessary to put it in the newspapers. That was at the time when there were at the Tuileries great sheep that drew the little carriage of the King of Rome. Do you remember the King of Rome?"

"I liked the Duc de Bordeaux better."

"I knew Louis XVIII. I prefer Louis XVIII."

"Meat is awfully dear, isn't it, Mother Patagon?"

"Ah! don't mention it, the butcher's shop is a horror. A

horrible horror — one can't afford anything but the poor cuts nowadays."

Here the rag-picker interposed :—

"Ladies, business is dull. The refuse heaps are miserable. No one throws anything away any more. They eat everything."

"There are poorer people than you, la Vargoulême."

"Ah, that's true," replied the rag-picker, with deference, "I have a profession."

A pause succeeded, and the rag-picker, yielding to that necessity for boasting which lies at the bottom of man, added :—

"In the morning, on my return home, I pick over my basket, I sort my things. This makes heaps in my room. I put the rags in a basket, the cores and stalks in a bucket, the linen in my cupboard, the woollen stuff in my commode, the old papers in the corner of the window, the things that are good to eat in my bowl, the bits of glass in my fireplace, the old shoes behind my door, and the bones under my bed."

Gavroche had stopped behind her and was listening.

"Old ladies," said he, "what do you mean by talking politics?"

He was assailed by a broadside, composed of a quadruple howl.

"Here's another rascal."

"What's that he's got in his paddle? A pistol?"

"Well, I'd like to know what sort of a beggar's brat this is?"

"That sort of animal is never easy unless he's overturning the authorities."

Gavroche disdainfully contented himself, by way of reprisal, with elevating the tip of his nose with his thumb and opening his hand wide.

The rag-picker cried :—

"You malicious, bare-pawed little wretch!"

The one who answered to the name of Patagon clapped her hands together in horror.

"There's going to be evil doings, that's certain. The errand-boy next door has a little pointed beard, I have seen him pass every day with a young person in a pink bonnet on his arm; to-day I saw him pass, and he had a gun on his arm. Mame Bacheux says, that last week there was a revolution at — at — at — where's the calf! — at Pontoise. And then, there you see him, that horrid scamp, with his pistol! It seems that the Célestins are full of pistols. What do you suppose the Government can do with good-for-nothings who don't know how to do anything but contrive ways of upsetting the world, when we

had just begun to get a little quiet after all the misfortunes that have happened, good Lord! to that poor queen whom I saw pass in the tumbril! And all this is going to make tobacco dearer. It's infamous! And I shall certainly go to see him beheaded on the guillotine, the wretch!"

"You've got the sniffles, old lady," said Gavroche. "Blow your promontory."

And he passed on. When he was in the Rue Pavée, the rag-picker occurred to his mind, and he indulged in this soliloquy:—

"You're in the wrong to insult the revolutionists, Mother Dust-Heap-Corner. This pistol is in your interests. It's so that you may have more good things to eat in your basket."

All at once, he heard a shout behind him; it was the portress Patagon who had followed him, and who was shaking her fist at him in the distance and crying:—

"You're nothing but a bastard."

"Oh! Come now," said Gavroche, "I don't care a brass farthing for that!"

Shortly afterwards, he passed the Hotel Lamoignon. There he uttered this appeal:—

"Forward march to the battle!"

And he was seized with a fit of melancholy. He gazed at his pistol with an air of reproach which seemed an attempt to appease it:—

"I'm going off," said he, "but you won't go off!"

One dog may distract the attention from another dog.¹ A very gaunt poodle came along at the moment. Gavroche felt compassion for him.

"My poor doggy," said he, "you must have gone and swallowed a cask, for all the hoops are visible."

Then he directed his course towards l'Orme-Saint-Gervais.

III. — JUST INDIGNATION OF A HAIR-DRESSER.

THE worthy hair-dresser who had chased from his shop the two little fellows to whom Gavroche had opened the paternal interior of the elephant was at that moment in his shop engaged in shaving an old soldier of the legion who had served under the Empire. They were talking. The hair-dresser had, naturally, spoken to the veteran of the riot, then of General Lamarque, and from Lamarque they had passed to the Emperor. Thence sprang up a conversation between barber and soldier which Prudhomme, had he been present, would have enriched

¹ *Chien*, dog, trigger.

with arabesques, and which he would have entitled : " Dialogue between the razor and the sword."

" How did the Emperor ride, sir?" said the barber.

" Badly. He did not know how to fall — so he never fell."

" Did he have fine horses? He must have had fine horses!"

" On the day when he gave me my cross, I noticed his beast. It was a racing mare, perfectly white. Her ears were very wide apart, her saddle deep, a fine head marked with a black star, a very long neck, strongly articulated knees, prominent ribs, oblique shoulders, and a powerful crupper. A little more than fifteen hands in height."

" A pretty horse," remarked the hair-dresser.

" It was His Majesty's beast."

The hair-dresser felt, that after this observation, a short silence would be fitting, so he conformed himself to it, and then went on :—

" The Emperor was never wounded but once, was he, sir?"

The old soldier replied with the calm and sovereign tone of a man who had been there :—

" In the heel. At Ratisbon. I never saw him so well dressed as on that day. He was as neat as a new sou."

" And you, Mr. Veteran, you must have been often wounded?"

" I?" said the soldier, " ah! not to amount to anything. At Marengo, I received two sabre-blows on the back of my neck, a bullet in the right arm at Austerlitz, another in the left hip at Jena. At Friedland, a thrust from a bayonet, there, — at the Moskowa seven or eight lance-thrusts, no matter where, at Lutzen a splinter of shell crushed one of my fingers. Ah! and then at Waterloo, a ball from a biscaien in the thigh, that's all."

" How fine that is!" exclaimed the hair-dresser, in Pindaric accents, " to die on the field of battle! On my word of honor, rather than die in bed, of an illness, slowly, a bit by bit each day, with drugs, cataplasms, syringes, medicines, I should prefer to receive a cannon-ball in my belly!"

" You're not over fastidious," said the soldier.

He had hardly spoken when a fearful crash shook the shop. The show-window had suddenly been fractured.

The wig-maker turned pale.

" Ah, good God!" he exclaimed, " it's one of them!"

" What?"

" A cannon-ball."

" Here it is," said the soldier.

And he picked up something that was rolling about the floor. It was a pebble.

The hair-dresser ran to the broken window and beheld Gavroche fleeing at the full speed, towards the Marché Saint-Jean. As he passed the hair-dresser's shop Gavroche, who had the two brats still in his mind, had not been able to resist the impulse to say good day to him, and had flung a stone through his panes.

"You see!" shrieked the hair-dresser, who from white had turned blue, "that fellow returns and does mischief for the pure pleasure of it. What has any one done to that gamin?"

IV.—THE CHILD IS AMAZED AT THE OLD MAN.

IN the meantime, in the Marché Saint-Jean, where the post had already been disarmed, Gavroche had just "effected a junction" with a band led by Enjolras, Courfeyrac, Combeferre, and Feuilly. They were armed after a fashion. Bahorel and Jean Prouvaire had found them and swelled the group. Enjolras had a double-barrelled hunting-gun, Combeferre the gun of a National Guard bearing the number of his legion, and in his belt, two pistols which his unbuttoned coat allowed to be seen, Jean Prouvaire an old cavalry musket, Bahorel a rifle; Courfeyrac was brandishing an unsheathed sword-cane. Feuilly, with a naked sword in his hand, marched at their head shouting: "Long live Poland!"

They reached the Quai Morland. Cravatless, hatless, breathless, soaked by the rain, with lightning in their eyes. Gavroche accosted them calmly:—

"Where are we going?"

"Come along," said Courfeyrac.

Behind Feuilly marched, or rather bounded, Bahorel, who was like a fish in water in a riot. He wore a scarlet waistcoat, and indulged in the sort of words which break everything. His waistcoat astounded a passer-by, who cried in bewilderment:—

"Here are the reds!"

"The red, the reds!" retorted Bahorel. "A queer kind of fear, bourgeois. For my part I don't tremble before a poppy, the little red hat inspires me with no alarm. Take my advice, bourgeois, let's leave fear of the red to horned cattle."

He caught sight of a corner of the wall on which was placarded the most peaceable sheet of paper in the world, a permission to eat eggs, a Lenten admonition addressed by the Archbishop of Paris to his "flock."

Bahorel exclaimed:—

“ ‘Flock’; a polite way of saying geese.”

And he tore the charge from the nail. This conquered Gavroche. From that instant Gavroche set himself to study Bahorel.

“Bahorel,” observed Enjolras, “you are wrong. You should have let that charge alone, he is not the person with whom we have to deal, you are wasting your wrath to no purpose. Take care of your supply. One does not fire out of the ranks with the soul any more than with a gun.”

“Each one in his own fashion, Enjolras,” retorted Bahorel. “This bishop’s prose shocks me; I want to eat eggs without being permitted. Your style is the hot and cold; I am amusing myself. Besides, I’m not wasting myself, I’m getting a start; and if I tore down that charge, *Hercle*! ’twas only to whet my appetite.”

This word, *Hercle*, struck Gavroche. He sought all occasions for learning, and that tearer-down of posters possessed his esteem. He inquired of him:—

“What does *Hercle* mean?”

Bahorel answered:—

“It means cursed name of a dog, in Latin.”

Here Bahorel recognized at a window a pale young man with a black beard who was watching them as they passed, probably a Friend of the A B C. He shouted to him:—

“Quick, cartridges, *para bellum*.”

“A fine man! that’s true,” said Gavroche, who now understood Latin.

A tumultuous retinue accompanied them, — students, artists, young men affiliated to the *Cougourde* of Aix, artisans, long-shoremen, armed with clubs and bayonets; some, like *Combeferre*, with pistols thrust into their trousers.

An old man, who appeared to be extremely aged, was walking in the band.

He had no arms, and he made great haste, so that he might not be left behind, although he had a thoughtful air.

Gavroche caught sight of him:—

“*Keksekça*?” said he to *Courfeyrac*.

“He’s an old duffer.”

It was M. Mabeuf.

V. — THE OLD MAN.

LET us recount what had taken place.

Enjolras and his friends had been on the *Boulevard Bourdon*,

near the public storehouses, at the moment when the dragoons had made their charge. Enjolras, Courfeyrac, and Combeferre were among those who had taken to the Rue Bassompierre, shouting: "To the barricades!" In the Rue Lesdiguières they had met an old man walking along. What had attracted their attention was, that the goodman was walking in a zig-zag, as though he were intoxicated. Moreover, he had his hat in his hand, although it had been raining all the morning, and was raining pretty briskly at the very time. Courfeyrac had recognized Father Mabeuf. He knew him through having many times accompanied Marius as far as his door. As he was acquainted with the peaceful and more than timid habits of the old beadle-book-collector, and was amazed at the sight of him in the midst of that uproar, a couple of paces from the cavalry charges, almost in the midst of a fusillade, hatless in the rain, and strolling about among the bullets, he had accosted him, and the following dialogue had been exchanged between the rioter of fire and the octogenarian:—

"M. Mabeuf, go to your home."

"Why?"

"There's going to be a row."

"That's well."

"Thrusts with the sword and firing, M. Mabeuf."

"That is well."

"Firing from cannon."

"That is good. Where are the rest of you going?"

"We are going to fling the government to the earth."

"That is good."

And he had set out to follow them. From that moment forth he had not uttered a word. His step had suddenly become firm; artisans had offered him their arms; he had refused with a sign of the head. He advanced nearly to the front rank of the column, with the movement of a man who is marching and the countenance of a man who is sleeping.

"What a fierce old fellow!" muttered the students. The rumor spread through the troop that he was a former member of the Convention, — an old regicide. The mob had turned in through the Rue de la Verrerie.

Little Gavroche marched in front with that deafening song which made of him a sort of trumpet.

He sang:—

"Voici la lune qui paraît,
Quand irons-nous dans la forêt?
Demandait Charlot à Charlotte.

Tou tou tou
Pour Chatou.

Je n'ai qu'un Dieu, qu'un roi, qu'un liard, et qu'une botte.

"Pour avoir bu de grand matin
La rosée à même le thym,
Deux moineaux étaient en ribotte.

Zi zi zi
Pour Passy.

Je n'ai qu'un Dieu, qu'un roi, qu'un liard, et qu'une botte.

"Et ces deux pauvres petits loups,
Comme deux grives étaient soûls;
Une tigre en riait dans sa grotte.

Don don don
Pour Meudon.

Je n'ai qu'un Dieu, qu'un roi, qu'un liard, et qu'une botte.

"L'un jurait et l'autre sacrait.
Quand irons nous dans la forêt?
Demandait Charlot à Charlotte.

Tin tin tin
Pour Pantin.

Je n'ai qu'un Dieu, qu'un roi, qu'un liard, et qu'une botte."¹

They directed their course towards Saint-Merry.

VI. — RECRUITS.

THE band augmented every moment. Near the Rue des Billettes, a man of lofty stature, whose hair was turning gray, and whose bold and daring mien was remarked by Courfeyrac, Enjolras, and Combeferre, but whom none of them knew, joined them. Gavroche, who was occupied in singing, whistling, humming, running on ahead and pounding on the shutters of the shops with the butt of his triggerless pistol, paid no attention to this man.

It chanced that in the Rue de la Verrerie, they passed in front of Courfeyrac's door.

"This happens just right," said Courfeyrac, "I have forgotten my purse, and I have lost my hat."

He quitted the mob and ran up to his quarters at full speed. He seized an old hat and his purse.

¹ Here is the morn appearing. When shall we go to the forest, Charlot asked Charlotte. Tou, tou, tou, for Chatou, I have but one God, one King, one half-farthing, and one boot. And these two poor little wolves were as tipsy as sparrows from having drunk dew and thyme very early in the morning. And these two poor little things were as drunk as thrushes in a vineyard; a tiger laughed at them in his cave. The one cursed, the other swore. When shall we go to the forest? Charlot asked Charlotte.

He also seized a large square coffer, of the dimensions of a large valise, which was concealed under his soiled linen.

As he descended again at a run, the portress hailed him:—

“Monsieur de Courfeyrac!”

“What’s your name, portress?”

The portress stood bewildered.

“Why, you know perfectly well, I’m the concierge; my name is Mother Veuvin.”

“Well, if you call me Monsieur de Courfeyrac again, I shall call you Mother de Veuvin. Now speak, what’s the matter? What do you want?”

“There is some one who wants to speak with you.”

“Who is it?”

“I don’t know.”

“Where is he?”

“In my lodge.”

“The devil!” ejaculated Courfeyrac.

“But the person has been waiting your return for over an hour,” said the portress.

At the same time, a sort of pale, thin, small, freckled, and youthful artisan, clad in a tattered blouse and patched trousers of ribbed velvet, and who had rather the air of a girl accoutred as a man than of a man, emerged from the lodge and said to Courfeyrac in a voice which was not the least in the world like a woman’s voice:—

“Monsieur Marius, if you please.”

“He is not here.”

“Will he return this evening?”

“I know nothing about it.”

And Courfeyrac added:—

“For my part, I shall not return.”

The young man gazed steadily at him and said:—

“Why not?”

“Because.”

“Where are you going, then?”

“What business is that of yours?”

“Would you like to have me carry your coffer for you?”

“I am going to the barricades.”

“Would you like to have me go with you?”

“If you like!” replied Courfeyrac. “The street is free, the pavements belong to every one.”

And he made his escape at a run to join his friends. When he had rejoined them, he gave the coffer to one of them to

carry. It was only a quarter of an hour after this that he saw the young man, who had actually followed them.

A mob does not go precisely where it intends. We have explained that a gust of wind carries it away. They overshot Saint-Merry and found themselves, without precisely knowing how, in the Rue Saint-Denis.



BOOK TWELFTH. — CORINTHE.

I. — HISTORY OF CORINTHE FROM ITS FOUNDATION.

THE Parisians who nowadays on entering on the Rue Rambuteau at the end near the Halles, notice on their right, opposite the Rue Mondétour, a basket-maker's shop having for its sign a basket in the form of Napoleon the Great with this inscription : —

NAPOLEON IS MADE
WHOLLY OF WILLOW,

have no suspicion of the terrible scenes which this very spot witnessed hardly thirty years ago.

It was there that lay the Rue de la Chanvrerie, which ancient deeds spell Chanverrierie, and the celebrated public-house called *Corinthe*.

The reader will remember all that has been said about the barricade effected at this point, and eclipsed, by the way, by the barricade Saint-Merry. It was on this famous barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, now fallen into profound obscurity, that we are about to shed a little light.

May we be permitted to recur, for the sake of clearness in the recital, to the simple means which we have already employed in the case of Waterloo. Persons who wish to picture to themselves in a tolerably exact manner the constitution of the houses which stood at that epoch near the Pointe Saint-Eustache, at the northeast angle of the Halles of Paris, where to-day lies the embouchure of the Rue Rambuteau, have only to imagine an N touching the Rue Saint-Denis with its summit and the Halles with its base, and whose two vertical bars should form the Rue de la Grande-Truanderie, and the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and whose transverse bar should be formed by the Rue de la Petite-Truanderie. The old Rue Mondétour cut the

three strokes of the N at the most crooked angles. So that the labyrinthine confusion of these four streets sufficed to form, on a space three fathoms square, between the Halles and the Rue Saint-Denis on the one hand, and between the Rue du Cygne and the Rue des Prêcheurs on the other, seven islands of houses, oddly cut up, of varying sizes, placed crosswise and hap-hazard, and barely separated, like the blocks of stone in a dock, by narrow crannies.

We say narrow crannies, and we can give no more just idea of those dark, contracted, many-angled alleys, lined with eight-story buildings. These buildings were so decrepit that, in the Rue de la Chanvrerie and the Rue de la Petite-Truanderie, the fronts were shored up with beams running from one house to another. The street was narrow and the gutter broad, the pedestrian there walked on a pavement that was always wet, skirting little stalls resembling cellars, big posts encircled with iron hoops, excessive heaps of refuse, and gates armed with enormous, century-old gratings. The Rue Rambuteau has devastated all that.

The name of Mondétour paints marvellously well the sinuosities of that whole set of streets. A little further on, they are found still better expressed by the *Rue Pirouette*, which ran into the Rue Mondétour.

The passer-by who got entangled from the Rue Saint-Denis in the Rue de la Chanvrerie beheld it gradually close in before him as though he had entered an elongated funnel. At the end of this street, which was very short, he found further passage barred in the direction of the Halles by a tall row of houses, and he would have thought himself in a blind alley, had he not perceived on the right and left two dark cuts through which he could make his escape. This was the Rue Mondétour, which on one side ran into the Rue de Prêcheurs, and on the other into the Rue du Cygne and the Petite-Truanderie. At the bottom of this sort of cul-de-sac, at the angle of the cutting on the right, there was to be seen a house which was not so tall as the rest, and which formed a sort of cape in the street. It is in this house, of two stories only, that an illustrious wine-shop had been merrily installed three hundred years before. This tavern created a joyous noise in the very spot which old Theophilus described in the following couplet:—

Le branle le squelette horrible
D'un pauvre amant qui se pendit.¹

¹ There swings the horrible skeleton of a poor lover who hung himself.

The situation was good, and tavern-keepers succeeded each other there, from father to son.

In the time of Mathurin Regnier, this cabaret was called the *Pot-aux-Roses*, and as the rebus was then in fashion, it had for its sign-board, a post (*poteau*) painted rose-color. In the last century, the worthy Natoire, one of the fantastic masters nowadays despised by the stiff school, having got drunk many times in this wine-shop at the very table where Regnier had drunk his fill, had painted, by way of gratitude, a bunch of Corinth grapes on the pink post. The keeper of the cabaret, in his joy, had changed his device and had caused to be placed in gilt letters beneath the bunch these words: "At the Bunch of Corinth Grapes" ("*Au Raisin de Corinthe*"). Hence the name of Corinthe. Nothing is more natural to drunken men than ellipses. The ellipsis is the zig-zag of the phrase. Corinthe gradually dethroned the Pot-aux-Roses. The last proprietor of the dynasty, Father Hucheloup, no longer acquainted even with the tradition, had the post painted blue.

A room on the ground-floor, where the bar was situated, one on the first floor containing a billiard-table, a wooden spiral staircase piercing the ceiling, wine on the tables, smoke on the walls, candles in broad daylight, — this was the style of this cabaret. A staircase with a trap-door in the lower room led to the cellar. On the second floor were the lodgings of the Hucheloup family. They were reached by a staircase which was a ladder rather than a staircase, and had for their entrance only a private door in the large room on the first floor. Under the roof, in two mansard attics, were the nests for the servants. The kitchen shared the ground-floor with the tap-room.

Father Hucheloup had, possibly, been born a chemist, but the fact is that he was a cook; people did not confine themselves to drinking alone in his wine-shop, they also ate there. Hucheloup had invented a capital thing which could be eaten nowhere but in his house, stuffed carps, which he called *carpes au gras*. These were eaten by the light of a tallow candle or of a lamp of the time of Louis XVI., on tables to which were nailed waxed cloths in lieu of table-cloths. People came thither from a distance. Hucheloup, one fine morning, had seen fit to notify passers-by of this "specialty"; he had dipped a brush in a pot of black paint, and as he was an orthographer on his own account, as well as a cook after his own fashion, he had improvised on his wall this remarkable inscription:—

CARPES HO GRAS.

One winter, the rain-storms and the showers had taken a fancy

to obliterate the S which terminated the first words, and the G which began the third ; this is what remained : —

CARPE HO RAS.

Time and rain assisting, a humble gastronomical announcement had become a profound piece of advice.

In this way it came about, that though he knew no French, Father Hucheloup understood Latin, that he had evoked philosophy from his kitchen, and that, desirous simply of effacing Lent, he had equalled Horace. And the striking thing about it was, that that also meant : “Enter my wine-shop.”

Nothing of all this is in existence now. The Mondétour labyrinth was disembowelled and widely opened in 1847, and probably no longer exists at the present moment. The Rue de la Chanvrerie and Corinthe have disappeared beneath the pavement of the Rue Rambuteau.

As we have already said, Corinthe was the meeting-place if not the rallying-point, of Courfeyrac and his friends. It was Grantaire who had discovered Corinthe. He had entered it on account of the *Carpe horas*, and had returned thither on account of the *Carpes au gras*. There they drank, there they ate, there they shouted ; they did not pay much, they paid badly, they did not pay at all, but they were always welcome. Father Hucheloup was a jovial host.

Hucheloup, that amiable man, as was just said, was a wine-shop-keeper with a mustache ; an amusing variety. He always had an ill-tempered air, seemed to wish to intimidate his customers, grumbled at the people who entered his establishment, and had rather the mien of seeking a quarrel with them than of serving them with soup. And yet, we insist upon the word, people were always welcome there. This oddity had attracted customers to his shop, and brought him young men, who said to each other : “Come hear Father Hucheloup growl.” He had been a fencing-master. All of a sudden, he would burst out laughing. A big voice, a good fellow. He had a comic foundation under a tragic exterior, he asked nothing better than to frighten you, very much like those snuff-boxes which are in the shape of a pistol. The detonation makes one sneeze.

Mother Hucheloup, his wife, was a bearded and a very homely creature.

About 1830, Father Hucheloup died. With him disappeared the secret of stuffed carps. His inconsolable widow continued to keep the wine-shop. But the cooking deteriorated, and became execrable ; the wine, which had always been bad, became

fearfully bad. Nevertheless, Courfeyrac and his friends continued to go to Corinthe, — out of pity, as Bossuet said.

The Widow Hucheloup was breathless and misshapen and given to rustic recollections. She deprived them of their flatness by her pronunciation. She had a way of her own of saying things, which spiced her reminiscences of the village and of her spring-time. It had formerly been her delight, so she affirmed, to hear the *loups-de-gorge* (*rouges-gorges*) *chanter dans les ogrepines* (*aubépines*) — to hear the redbreasts sing in the hawthorn-trees.

The hall on the first floor, where “the restaurant” was situated, was a large and long apartment encumbered with stools, chairs, benches, and tables, and with a crippled, lame, old billiard-table. It was reached by a spiral staircase which terminated in the corner of the room at a square hole like the hatchway of a ship.

This room, lighted by a single narrow window, and by a lamp that was always burning, had the air of a garret. All the four-footed furniture comported itself as though it had but three legs — the whitewashed walls had for their only ornament the following quatrain in honor of Mame Hucheloup: —

Elle étonne à dix pas, elle épouvante à deux,
Une verrue habite en son nez hasardeux;
On tremble à chaque instant qu'elle ne vous la mouche
Et qu'un beau jour son nez ne tombe dans sa bouche.¹

This was scrawled in charcoal on the wall.

Mame Hucheloup, a good likeness, went and came from morning till night before this quatrain with the most perfect tranquillity. Two serving-maids, named Matelote and Gibelotte,² and who had never been known by any other names, helped Mame Hucheloup to set on the tables the jugs of poor wine, and the various broths which were served to the hungry patrons in earthenware bowls. Matelote, large, plump, red-haired, and noisy, the favorite ex-sultana of the defunct Hucheloup, was homelier than any mythological monster, be it what it may; still, as it becomes the servant to always keep in the rear of the mistress, she was less homely than Mame Hucheloup. Gibelotte, tall, delicate, white with a lymphatic pallor, with circles round her eyes, and drooping lids, always languid and weary, afflicted with what may be called chronic lassitude, the first up in the house and the last in bed, waited on every one, even the other maid, silently and gently, smiling through her fatigue with a vague and sleepy smile.

¹ She astounds at ten paces, she frightens at two, a wart inhabits her hazardous nose; you tremble every instant lest she should blow it at you, and lest, some fine day, her nose should tumble into her mouth.

² *Matelote*: a culinary preparation of various fishes. *Gibelotte*: stewed rabbits.

Before entering the restaurant room, the visitor read on the door the following line written there in chalk by Courfeyrac :—

Régale si tu peux et mange si tu l'oses.¹

II. — PRELIMINARY GAYETIES.

LAIGLE DE MEAUX, as the reader knows, lived more with Joly than elsewhere. He had a lodging, as a bird has one on a branch. The two friends lived together, ate together, slept together. They had everything in common, even Musichetta, to some extent. They were, what the subordinate monks who accompany monks are called, *bini*. On the morning of the 5th of June, they went to Corinthe to breakfast. Joly, who was all stuffed up, had a catarrh which Laigle was beginning to share. Laigle's coat was threadbare, but Joly was well dressed.

It was about nine o'clock in the morning, when they opened the door of Corinthe.

They ascended to the first floor.

Matelote and Gibelotte received them.

"Oysters, cheese, and ham," said Laigle.

And they seated themselves at a table.

The wine-shop was empty ; there was no one there but themselves.

Gibelotte, knowing Joly and Laigle, set a bottle of wine on the table.

While they were busy with their first oysters, a head appeared at the hatchway of the staircase, and a voice said :—

"I am passing by. I smell from the street a delicious odor of Brie cheese. I enter." It was Grantaire.

Grantaire took a stool and drew up to the table.

At the sight of Grantaire, Gibelotte placed two bottles of wine on the table.

That made three.

"Are you going to drink those two bottles?" Laigle inquired of Grantaire.

Grantaire replied :—

"All are ingenious, thou alone art ingenuous. Two bottles never yet astonished a man."

The others had begun by eating, Grantaire began by drinking. Half a bottle was rapidly gulped down.

"So you have a hole in your stomach?" began Laigle again.

¹ Treat if you can, and eat if you dare.

"You have one in your elbow," said Grantaire.

And after having emptied his glass, he added:—

"Ah, by the way, Laigle of the funeral oration, your coat is old."

"I should hope so," retorted Laigle. "That's why we get on well together, my coat and I. It has acquired all my folds, it does not bind me anywhere, it is moulded on my deformities, it falls in with all my movements, I am only conscious of it because it keeps me warm. Old coats are just like old friends."

"That's true," ejaculated Joly, striking into the dialogue, "an old goat is an old abi" (*ami*, friend).

"Especially in the mouth of a man whose head is stuffed up," said Grantaire.

"Grantaire," demanded Laigle, "have you just come from the boulevard?"

"No."

"We have just seen the head of the procession pass, Joly and I."

"It's a marvellous sight," said Joly.

"How quiet this street is!" exclaimed Laigle. "Who would suspect that Paris was turned upside down? How plainly it is to be seen that in former days there were nothing but convents here! In this neighborhood! Du Breul and Sauval give a list of them, and so does the Abbé Lebeuf. They were all round here, they fairly swarmed, booted and barefooted, shaven, bearded, gray, black, white, Franciscans, Minims, Capuchins, Carmelites, Little Augustines, Great Augustines, old Augustines—there was no end of them."

"Don't let's talk of monks," interrupted Grantaire, "it makes one want to scratch one's self."

Then he exclaimed:—

"Bouh! I've just swallowed a bad oyster. Now hypochondria is taking possession of me again. The oysters are spoiled, the servants are ugly. I hate the human race. I just passed through the Rue Richelieu, in front of the big public library. That pile of oyster-shells which is called a library is disgusting even to think of. What paper! What ink! What scrawling! And all that has been written! What rascal was it who said that man was a featherless biped¹? And then, I met a pretty girl of my acquaintance, who is as beautiful as the spring, worthy to be called Floréal, and who is delighted, enraptured, as happy as the angels, because a wretch yesterday, a frightful banker

¹ *Bipède sans plume*: biped without feathers — or pen.

all spotted with small-pox, deigned to take a fancy to her ! Alas ! woman keeps on the watch for a protector as much as for a lover ; cats chase mice as well as birds. Two months ago that young woman was virtuous in an attic, she adjusted little brass rings in the eyelet-holes of corsets, what do you call it ? She sewed, she had a camp bed, she dwelt beside a pot of flowers, she was contented. Now here she is a bankeress. This transformation took place last night. I met the victim this morning in high spirits. The hideous point about it is, that the jade is as pretty to-day as she was yesterday. Her financier did not show in her face. Roses have this advantage or disadvantage over women, that the traces left upon them by caterpillars are visible. Ah ! there is no morality on earth. I call to witness the myrtle, the symbol of love, the laurel, the symbol of air, the olive, that ninny, the symbol of peace, the apple-tree which came nearst wrangling Adam with its pips, and the fig-tree, the grandfather of petticoats. As for right, do you know what right is ? The Gauls covet Clusium, Rome protects Clusium, and demands what wrong Clusium has done to them. Brennus answers : "The wrong that Alba did to you, the wrong that Fidenæ did to you, the wrong that the Eques, the Volsci, and the Sabines have done to you. They were your neighbors. The Clusians are ours. We understand neighborliness just as you do. You have stolen Alba, we shall take Clusium." Rome said : "You shall not take Clusium." Brennus took Rome. Then he cried : "Væ victis !" That is what right is. Ah ! what beasts of prey there are in this world ! What eagles ! It makes my flesh creep."

He held out his glass to Joly, who filled it, then he drank and went on, having hardly been interrupted by this glass of wine, of which no one, not even himself, had taken any notice :—

"Brennus, who takes Rome, is an eagle ; the banker who takes the grisette is an eagle. There is no more modesty in the one case than in the other. So we believe in nothing. There is but one reality : drink. Whatever your opinion may be in favor of the lean cock, like the Canton of Uri, or in favor of the fat cock, like the Canton of Glaris, it matters little, drink. You talk to me of the boulevard, of that procession, *et cætera*, *et cætera*. Come now, is there going to be another revolution ? This poverty of means on the part of the good God astounds me. He has to keep greasing the groove of events every moment. There is a hitch, it won't work. Quick, a revolution ! The good God has his hands perpetually black with that cart-grease. If I were in his place, I'd be perfectly simple about it,

I would not wind up my mechanism every minute, I'd lead the human race in a straightforward way, I'd weave matters mesh by mesh, without breaking the thread, I would have no provisional arrangements, I would have no extraordinary repertory. What the rest of you call progress advances by means of two motors, men and events. But, sad to say, from time to time, the exceptional becomes necessary. The ordinary troupe suffices neither for event; nor for men: among men geniuses are required, among events revolutions. Great accidents are the law; the order of things cannot do without them; and, judging from the apparition of comets, one would be tempted to think that Heaven itself finds actors needed for its performance. At the moment when one expects it the least, God placards a meteor on the wall of the firmament. Some queer star turns up, underlined by an enormous tail. And that causes the death of Cæsar. Brutus deals him a blow with a knife, and God a blow with a comet. *Crac*, and behold an aurora borealis, behold a revolution, behold a great man; '93 in big letters, Napoleon on guard, the comet of 1811 at the head of the poster. Ah! what a beautiful blue theatre all studded with unexpected flashes! Boum! Boum! extraordinary show! Raise your eyes, boobies. Everything is in disorder, the star as well as the drama. Good God, it is too much and not enough. These resources, gathered from exception, seem magnificence and poverty. My friends, Providence has come down to expedients. What does a revolution prove? That God is in a quandary. He effects a *coup d'état* because he, God, has not been able to make both ends meet. In fact, this confirms me in my conjectures as to Jehovah's fortune; and when I see so much distress in heaven and on earth, from the bird who has not a grain of millet to myself without a hundred thousand livres of income, when I see human destiny, which is very badly worn, and even royal destiny, which is threadbare, witness the Prince de Condé hung, when I see winter, which is nothing but a rent in the zenith through which the wind blows, when I see so many rags even in the perfectly new purple of the morning on the crests of hills, when I see the drops of dew, those mock pearls, when I see the frost, that paste, when I see humanity ripped apart and events patched up, and so many spots on the sun and so many holes in the moon, when I see so much misery everywhere, I suspect that God is not rich. The appearance exists, it is true, but I feel that he is hard up. He gives a revolution as a tradesman whose money-box is empty gives a ball. God must not be judged from appearances. Beneath the gilding of heaven I perceive a poverty-stricken universe.

Creation is bankrupt. That is why I am discontented. Here it is the 4th of June, it is almost night; ever since this morning I have been waiting for daylight to come; it has not come, and I bet that it won't come all day. This is the inexactness of an ill-paid clerk. Yes, everything is badly arranged, nothing fits anything else, this old world is all warped, I take my stand on the opposition, everything goes awry; the universe is a tease. It's like children, those who want them have none, and those who don't want them have them. Total: I'm vexed. Besides, Laigle de Meaux, that bald-head, offends my sight. It humiliates me to think that I am of the same age as that baldy. However, I criticise, but I do not insult. The universe is what it is. I speak here without evil intent and to ease my conscience. Receive, Eternal Father, the assurance of my distinguished consideration. Ah! by all the saints of Olympus and by all the gods of paradise, I was not intended to be a Parisian, that is to say, to rebound forever, like a shuttlecock between two battle-dores, from the group of the loungers to the group of the roysterers. I was made to be a Turk, watching oriental houris all day long, executing those exquisite Egyptian dances, as sensuous as the dream of a chaste man, or a Beauceron peasant, or a Venetian gentleman surrounded by gentlewomen, or a petty German prince, furnishing the half of a foot-soldier to the Germanic confederation, and occupying his leisure with drying his breeches on his hedge, that is to say, his frontier. Those are the positions for which I was born! Yes, I have said a Turk, and I will not retract. I do not understand how people can habitually take Turks in bad part; Mohammed had his good points; respect for the inventor of seraglios with houris and paradises with odalisques! Let us not insult Mohammedanism, the only religion which is ornamented with a hen-roost! Now, I insist on a drink. The earth is a great piece of stupidity. And it appears that they are going to fight, all those imbeciles, and to break each other's profiles and to massacre each other in the heart of summer, in the month of June, when they might go off with a creature on their arm, to breathe the immense heaps of new-mown hay in the meadows! Really, people do commit altogether too many follies. An old broken lantern which I have just seen at a bric-à-brac merchant's suggests a reflection to my mind; it is time to enlighten the human race. Yes, behold me sad again. That's what comes of swallowing an oyster and a revolution the wrong way! I am growing melancholy once more. Oh! frightful old world. People strive, turn each other out, prostitute themselves, kill each other, and get used to it!"

And Grantaire, after this fit of eloquence, had a fit of coughing, which was well earned.

"À propos of revolution," said Joly, "it is decidedly abbarent that Barius is in lub."

"Does any one know with whom?" demanded Laigle.

"Do."

"No?"

"Do! I tell you."

"Marius' love affairs!" exclaimed Grantaire. "I can imagine it. Marius is a fog, and he must have found a vapor. Marius is of the race of poets. He who says poet, says fool, madman, *Tymbræus Apollo*. Marius and his Marie, or his Marion, or his Maria, or his Mariette. They must make a queer pair of lovers. I know just what it is like. Ecstasies in which they forget to kiss: Pure on earth, but joined in heaven. They are souls possessed of senses. They lie among the stars."

Grantaire was attacking his second bottle and, possibly, his second harangue, when a new personage emerged from the square aperture of the stairs. It was a boy less than ten years of age, ragged, very small, yellow, with an odd phiz, a vivacious eye, an enormous amount of hair drenched with rain, and wearing a contented air.

The child unhesitatingly making his choice among the three, addressed himself to Laigle de Meaux.

"Are you Monsieur Bossuet?"

"That is my nickname," replied Laigle. "What do you want with me?"

"This. A tall blonde fellow on the boulevard said to me: 'Do you know Mother Hucheloup?' I said: 'Yes, Rue Chanvrerie, the old man's widow;' he said to me: 'Go there. There you will find M. Bossuet. Tell him from me: 'A B C.' It's a joke that they're playing on you, isn't it? He gave me ten sous."

"Joly, lend me ten sous," said Laigle; and, turning to Grantaire: "Grantaire, lend me ten sous."

This made twenty sous, which Laigle handed to the lad.

"Thank you, sir," said the urchin.

"What is your name?" inquired Laigle.

"Navet, Gavroche's friend."

"Stay with us," said Laigle.

"Breakfast with us," said Grantaire.

The child replied:—

"I can't, I belong in the procession, I'm the one to shout Down with Polignac!"

And executing a prolonged scrape of his foot behind him, which is the most respectful of all possible salutes, he took his departure.

The child gone, Grantaire took the word :—

"That is the pure-bred gamin. There are a great many varieties of the gamin species. The notary's gamin is called Skip-the-Gutter, the cook's gamin is called a scullion, the baker's gamin is called a *mitron*, the lackey's gamin is called a groom, the marine gamin is called the cabin-boy, the soldier's gamin is called the drummer-boy, the painter's gamin is called paint-grinder, the tradesman's gamin is called an errand-boy, the courtesan gamin is called the minion, the kingly gamin is called the dauphin, the god gamin is called the bambino."

In the meantime, Laigle was engaged in reflection ; he said half aloud :—

"A B C, that is to say : the burial of Lamarque."

"The tall blonde," remarked Grantaire, "is Enjolras, who is sending you a warning."

"Shall we go?" ejaculated Bossuet.

"It's raiding," said Joly. "I have sworn to go through fire, but not through water. I don't want to get a gold."

"I shall stay here," said Grantaire. "I prefer a breakfast to a hearse."

"Conclusion : we remain," said Laigle. "Well, then, let us drink. Besides, we might miss the funeral without missing the riot."

"Ah ! the riot, I am with you !" cried Joly.

Laigle rubbed his hands.

"Now we're going to touch up the revolution of 1830. As a matter of fact, it does hurt the people along the seams."

"I don't think much of your revolution," said Grantaire. "I don't execrate this Government. It is the crown tempered by the cotton night-cap. It is a sceptre ending in an umbrella. In fact, I think that to-day, with the present weather, Louis Philippe might utilize his royalty in two directions, he might extend the tip of the sceptre end against the people, and open the umbrella end against heaven."

The room was dark, large clouds had just finished the extinction of daylight. There was no one in the wine-shop, or in the street, every one having gone off "to watch events."

"Is it mid-day or midnight?" cried Bossuet. "You can't see your hand before your face. Gibelotte, fetch a light."

Grantaire was drinking in a melancholy way.

"Enjolras disdains me," he muttered. "Enjolras said : 'Joly

is ill, Grantaire is drunk.' It was to Bossuet that he sent Navet. If he had come for me, I would have followed him. So much the worse for Enjolras! I won't go to his funeral."

This resolution once arrived at, Bossuet, Joly, and Grantaire did not stir from the wine-shop. By two o'clock in the afternoon, the table at which they sat was covered with empty bottles. Two candles were burning on it, one in a flat copper candlestick which was perfectly green, the other in the neck of a cracked caraffe. Grantaire had seduced Joly and Bossuet to wine; Bossuet and Joly had conducted Grantaire back towards cheerfulness.

As for Grantaire, he had got beyond wine, that merely moderate inspirer of dreams, ever since mid-day. Wine enjoys only a conventional popularity with serious drinkers. There is, in fact, in the matter of inebriety, white magic and black magic; wine is only white magic. Grantaire was a daring drinker of dreams. The blackness of a terrible fit of drunkenness yawning before him, far from arresting him, attracted him. He had abandoned the bottle and taken to the beer-glass. The beer-glass is the abyss. Having neither opium nor hashish on hand, and being desirous of filling his brain with twilight, he had had recourse to that fearful mixture of brandy, stout, absinthe, which produces the most terrible of lethargies. It is of these three vapors, beer, brandy, and absinthe, that the lead of the soul is composed. They are three glooms; the celestial butterfly is drowned in them; and there are formed there in a membranous smoke, vaguely condensed into the wing of the bat, three mute furies, Nightmare, Night, and Death, which hover above the slumbering Psyche.

Grantaire had not yet reached that lamentable phase; far from it. He was tremendously gay, and Bossuet and Joly retorted. They clinked glasses. Grantaire added to the eccentric accentuation of words and ideas, a peculiarity of gesture; he rested his left fist on his knee with dignity, his arm forming a right angle, and, with cravat untied, seated astride a stool, his full glass in his right hand, he hurled solemn words at the big maid-servant Matelote:—

"Let the doors of the palace be thrown open! Let every one be a member of the French Academy and have the right to embrace Madame Hucheloup. Let us drink."

And turning to Madame Hucheloup, he added:—

"Woman ancient and consecrated by use, draw near that I may contemplate thee!"

And Joly exclaimed:—

"Matelote and Gibelotte, dod't gib Grantaire anything more to drink. He has already devoured, since this bording, in wild prodigality, two francs and ninety-five centibès."

And Grantaire began again:—

"Who has been unhooking the stars without my permission, and putting them on the table in the guise of candles?"

Bossuet, though very drunk, preserved his equanimity.

He was seated on the sill of the open window, wetting his back in the falling rain, and gazing at his two friends.

All at once, he heard a tumult behind him, hurried footsteps, cries of "To arms!" He turned round and saw in the Rue Saint-Denis, at the end of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, Enjolras passing, gun in hand, and Gavroche with his pistol, Feuilly with his sword, Courfeyrac with his sword, and Jean Prouvaire with his blunderbuss, Combeferre with his gun, Bahorel with his gun, and the whole armed and stormy rabble which was following them.

The Rue de la Chanvrerie was not more than a gunshot long. Bossuet improvised a speaking-trumpet from his two hands placed around his mouth, and shouted:—

"Courfeyrac! Courfeyrac! Hohée!"

Courfeyrac heard the shout, caught sight of Bossuet, and advanced a few paces into the Rue de la Chanvrerie, shouting: "What do you want?" which crossed a "Where are you going?"

"To make a barricade," replied Courfeyrac.

"Well, here! This is a good place! Make it here!"

"That's true, Aigle," said Courfeyrac.

And at a signal from Courfeyrac, the mob flung themselves into the Rue de la Chanvrerie.

III. — NIGHT BEGINS TO DESCEND UPON GRANTAIRE.

THE spot was, in fact, admirably adapted, the entrance to the street widened out, the other extremity narrowed together into a pocket without exit. Corinthe created an obstacle, the Rue Mondétour was easily barricaded on the right and the left, no attack was possible except from the Rue Saint-Denis, that is to say, in front, and in full sight. Bossuet had the comprehensive glance of a fasting Hannibal.

Terror had seized on the whole street at the irruption of the mob. There was not a passer-by who did not get out of sight. In the space of a flash of lightning, in the rear, to right and left, shops, stables, area-doors, windows, blinds, attic sky-

lights, shutters of every description were closed, from the ground floor to the roof. A terrified old woman fixed a mattress in front of her window on two clothes-poles for drying linen, in order to deaden the effect of musketry. The wine-shop alone remained open; and that for a very good reason, that the mob had rushed into it. — “Ah my God! Ah my God!” sighed Mame Hucheloup.

Bossuet had gone down to meet Courfeyrac.

Joly, who had placed himself at the window, exclaimed:—

“Courfeyrac, you ought to have brought an umbrella. You will catch gold.”

In the meantime, in the space of a few minutes, twenty iron bars had been wrenched from the grated front of the wine-shop, ten fathoms of street had been unpaved; Gavroche and Bahorel had seized in its passage, and overturned, the dray of a lime-dealer named Anceau; this dray contained three barrels of lime, which they placed beneath the piles of paving-stones: Enjolras raised the cellar trap, and all the widow Hucheloup's empty casks were used to flank the barrels of lime; Feuilly, with his fingers skilled in painting the delicate sticks of fans, had backed up the barrels and the dray with two massive heaps of blocks of rough stone. Blocks which were improvised like the rest and procured no one knows where. The beams which served as props were torn from the neighboring house-fronts and laid on the casks. When Bossuet and Courfeyrac turned round, half the street was already barred with a rampart higher than a man. There is nothing like the hand of the populace for building everything that is built by demolishing.

Matelote and Gibelotte had mingled with the workers. Gibelotte went and came loaded with rubbish. Her lassitude helped on the barricade. She served the barricade as she would have served wine, with a sleepy air.

An omnibus with two white horses passed the end of the street.

Bossuet strode over the paving-stones, ran to it, stopped the driver, made the passengers alight, offered his hand to “the ladies,” dismissed the conductor, and returned, leading the vehicle and the horses by the bridle.

“Omnibuses,” said he, “do not pass the Corinthe. *Non licet omnibus adire Corinthum.*”

An instant later, the horses were unharnessed and went off at their will, through the Rue Mondétour, and the omnibus lying on its side completed the bar across the street.

Mame Hucheloup, quite upset, had taken refuge in the first story.

Her eyes were vague, and stared without seeing anything, and she cried in a low tone. Her terrified shrieks did not dare to emerge from her throat.

"The end of the world has come," she muttered.

Joly deposited a kiss on Mame Hucheloup's fat, red, wrinkled neck, and said to Grantaire: "My dear fellow, I have always regarded a woman's neck as an infinitely delicate thing."

But Grantaire attained to the highest regions of dithyramb. Matelote had mounted to the first floor once more, Grantaire seized her round her waist, and gave vent to long bursts of laughter at the window.

"Matelote is homely!" he cried: "Matelote is of a dream of ugliness! Matelote is a chimæra. This is the secret of her birth: a Gothic Pygmalion, who was making gargoyles for cathedrals fell in love with one of them, the most horrible, one fine morning. He besought Love to give it life, and this produced Matelote. Look at her, citizens! She has chromate-of-lead-colored hair, like Titian's mistress, and she is a good girl. I guarantee that she will fight well. Every good girl contains a hero. As for Mother Hucheloup, she's an old warrior. Look at her moustaches! She inherited them from her husband. A hussar indeed! She will fight too. These two alone will strike terror to the heart of the banlieue. Comrades, we shall overthrow the government as true as there are fifteen intermediary acids between margaric acid and formic acid; however, that is a matter of perfect indifference to me. Gentlemen, my father always detested me because I could not understand mathematics. I understand only love and liberty. I am Grantaire, the good fellow. Having never had any money, I never acquired the habit of it, and the result is that I have never lacked it; but, if I had been rich, there would have been no more poor people! You would have seen! Oh, if the kind hearts only had fat purses, how much better things would go! I picture myself Jesus Christ with Rothschild's fortune! How much good he would do! Matelote, embrace me! You are voluptuous and timid! You have cheeks which invite the kiss of a sister, and lips which claim the kiss of a lover."

"Hold your tongue, you cask!" said Courfeyrac.

Grantaire retorted:—

"I am the capitoul¹ and the master of the floral games!"

Enjolras, who was standing on the crest of the barricade, gun in hand, raised his beautiful, austere face. Enjolras, as

¹ Municipal officer of Toulouse.

the reader knows, had something of the Spartan and of the Puritan in his composition. He would have perished at Thermopylæ with Leonidas, and burned at Drogheda with Cromwell.

“Grantaire,” he shouted, “go get rid of the fumes of your wine somewhere else than here. This is the place for enthusiasm, not for drunkenness. Don’t disgrace the barricade!”

This angry speech produced a singular effect on Grantaire. One would have said that he had had a glass of cold water flung in his face. He seemed to be rendered suddenly sober.

He sat down, put his elbows on a table near the window, looked at Enjolras with indescribable gentleness, and said to him:—

“Let me sleep here.”

“Go and sleep somewhere else,” cried Enjolras.

But Grantaire, still keeping his tender and troubled eyes fixed on him, replied:—

“Let me sleep here, — until I die.”

Enjolras regarded him with disdainful eyes:—

“Grantaire, you are incapable of believing, of thinking, of willing, of living, and of dying.”

Grantaire replied in a grave tone:—

“You will see.”

He stammered a few more unintelligible words, then his head fell heavily on the table, and, as is the usual effect of the second period of inebriety, into which Enjolras had roughly and abruptly thrust him, an instant later he had fallen asleep.

IV. — AN ATTEMPT TO CONSOLE THE WIDOW HUCHELOUP.

BAHOREL, in ecstasies over the barricade, shouted:—

“Here’s the street in its low-necked dress! How well it looks!”

Courfeyrac, as he demolished the wine-shop to some extent, sought to console the widowed proprietress.

“Mother Hucheloup, weren’t you complaining the other day because you had had a notice served on you for infringing the law, because Gibelotte shook a counterpane out of your window?”

“Yes, my good Monsieur Courfeyrac. Ah! good Heavens, are you going to put that table of mine in your horror, too? And it was for the counterpane, and also for a pot of flowers which fell from the attic window into the street, that the govern-

ment collected a fine of a hundred francs. If that isn't an abomination, what is !"

"Well, Mother Hucheloup, we are avenging you."

Mother Hucheloup did not appear to understand very clearly the benefit which she was to derive from these reprisals made on her account. She was satisfied after the manner of that Arab woman, who, having received a box on the ear from her husband, went to complain to her father, and cried for vengeance, saying: "Father, you owe my husband affront for affront." The father asked: "On which cheek did you receive the blow?" "On the left cheek." The father slapped her right cheek and said: "Now you are satisfied. Go tell your husband that he boxed my daughter's ears, and that I have accordingly boxed his wife's."

The rain had ceased. Recruits had arrived. Workmen had brought under their blouses a barrel of powder, a basket containing bottles of vitriol, two or three carnival torches, and a basket filled with fire-pots, "left over from the King's festival." This festival was very recent, having taken place on the 1st of May. It was said that these munitions came from a grocer in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine named Pépin. They smashed the only street lantern in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the lantern corresponding to one in the Rue Saint-Denis, and all the lanterns in the surrounding streets, de Mondétour, du Cygne, des Prêcheurs, and de la Grande and de la Petite-Truanderie.

Enjolras, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac directed everything. Two barricades were now in process of construction at once, both of them resting on the Corinthe house and forming a right angle; the larger shut off the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the other closed the Rue Mondétour, on the side of the Rue de Cygne. This last barricade, which was very narrow, was constructed only of casks and paving-stones. There were about fifty workers on it; thirty were armed with guns; for, on their way, they had effected a wholesale loan from an armorer's shop.

Nothing could be more bizarre and at the same time more motley than this troop. One had a round-jacket, a cavalry sabre, and two holster-pistols, another was in his shirt-sleeves, with a round hat, and a powder-horn slung at his side, a third wore a plastron of nine sheets of gray paper and was armed with a saddler's awl. There was one who was shouting: "Let us exterminate them to the last man and die at the point of our bayonet." This man had no bayonet. Another spread out over his coat the cross-belt and cartridge-box of a National Guardsman, the cover of the cartridge-box being ornamented with this inscription in

red worsted: *Public Order*. There were a great many guns bearing the numbers of the legions, few hats, no cravats, many bare arms, some pikes. Add to this, all ages, all sorts of faces, small, pale young men, and bronzed longshoremen. All were in haste; and as they helped each other, they discussed the possible chances. That they would receive succor about three o'clock in the morning — that they were sure of one regiment, that Paris would rise. Terrible sayings with which was mingled a sort of cordial jovialty. One would have pronounced them brothers, but they did not know each other's names. Great perils have this fine characteristic, that they bring to light the fraternity of strangers. A fire had been lighted in the kitchen, and there they were engaged in moulding into bullets, pewter mugs, spoons, forks, and all the brass table-ware of the establishment. In the midst of it all, they drank. Caps and buckshot were mixed pell-mell on the tables with glasses of wine. In the billiard-hall, Mame Hucheloup, Matelote, and Gibelotte, variously modified by terror, which had stupefied one, rendered another breathless, and roused the third, were tearing up old dish-cloths and making lint; three insurgents were assisting them, three bushy-haired, jolly blades with beards and moustaches, who plucked away at the linen with the fingers of seamstresses and who made them tremble.

The man of lofty stature whom Courfeyrac, Combeferre, and Enjolras had observed at the moment when he joined the mob at the corner of the Rue des Billettes, was at work on the smaller barricade and was making himself useful there. Gavroche was working on the larger one. As for the young man who had been waiting for Courfeyrac at his lodgings, and who had inquired for M. Marius, he had disappeared at about the time when the omnibus had been overturned.

Gavroche, completely carried away and radiant, had undertaken to get everything in readiness. He went, came, mounted, descended, re-mounted, whistled, and sparkled. He seemed to be there for the encouragement of all. Had he any incentive? Yes, certainly, his poverty; had he wings? yes, certainly, his joy. Gavroche was a whirlwind. He was constantly visible, he was incessantly audible. He filled the air, as he was everywhere at once. His was a sort of almost irritating ubiquity; no halt was possible with him. The enormous barricade felt him on its haunches. He troubled the loungers, he excited the idle, he reanimated the weary, he grew impatient over the thoughtful, he inspired gayety in some, and breath in others, wrath in others, movement in all, now pricking a student, now biting an

artisan ; he alighted, paused, flew off again, hovered over the tumult, and the effort, sprang from one party to another, murmuring and humming, and harassed the whole company ; a fly on the immense revolutionary coach.

Perpetual motion was in his little arms and perpetual clamor in his little lungs.

"Courage ! more paving-stones ! more casks ! more machines ! Where are you now ? A hod of plaster for me to stop this hole with ! Your barricade is very small. It must be carried up. Put everything on it, fling everything there, stick it all in. Break down the house. A barricade is Mother Gibou's tea. Hulloo, here's a glass door."

This elicited an exclamation from the workers.

"A glass door ? what do you expect us to do with a glass door, tubercle ?"

"Hercules yourselves !" retorted Gavroche. "A glass door is an excellent thing in a barricade. It does not prevent an attack, but it prevents the enemy taking it. So you've never prigged apples over a wall where there were broken bottles ? A glass door cuts the corns of the National Guard when they try to mount on the barricade. Pardi ! glass is a treacherous thing. Well, you haven't a very wildly lively imagination, comrades."

However, he was furious over his triggerless pistol. He went from one to another, demanding : "A gun, I want a gun ! Why don't you give me a gun ?"

"Give you a gun !" said Combeferre.

"Come now !" said Gavroche, "why not ? I had one in 1830 when we had a dispute with Charles X."

Enjolras shrugged his shoulders.

"When there are enough for the men, we will give some to the children."

Gavroche wheeled round haughtily, and answered : —

"If you are killed before me, I shall take yours."

"Gamin !" said Enjolras.

"Greenhorn !" said Gavroche.

A dandy who had lost his way and who lounged past the end of the street created a diversion ! Gavroche shouted to him : —

"Come with us, young fellow ! well now, don't we do anything for this old country of ours ?"

The dandy fled.

V. — PREPARATIONS.

THE journals of the day which said that that *nearly impregnable structure*, of the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie,

as they call it, reached to the level of the first floor, were mistaken. The fact is, that it did not exceed an average height of six or seven feet. It was built in such a manner that the combatants could, at their will, either disappear behind it or dominate the barrier and even scale its crest by means of a quadruple row of paving-stones placed on top of each other and arranged as steps in the interior. On the outside, the front of the barricade, composed of piles of paving-stones and casks bound together by beams and planks, which were entangled in the wheels of Anceau's dray and of the overturned omnibus, had a bristling and inextricable aspect.

An aperture large enough to allow a man to pass through had been made between the wall of the houses and the extremity of the barricade which was furthest from the wine-shop, so that an exit was possible at this point. The pole of the omnibus was placed upright and held up with ropes, and a red flag, fastened to this pole, floated over the barricade.

The little Mondétour barricade, hidden behind the wine-shop building, was not visible. The two barricades united formed a veritable redoubt. Enjolras and Courfeyrac had not thought fit to barricade the other fragment of the Rue Mondétour which opens through the Rue des Prêcheurs an issue into the Halles, wishing, no doubt, to preserve a possible communication with the outside, and not entertaining much fear of an attack through the dangerous and difficult street of the Rue des Prêcheurs.

With the exception of this issue which was left free, and which constituted what Folard in his strategical style would have termed a branch, and taking into account, also, the narrow cutting arranged on the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the interior of the barricade, where the wine-shop formed a salient angle, presented an irregular square, closed on all sides. There existed an interval of twenty paces between the grand barrier and the lofty houses which formed the background of the street, so that one might say that the barricade rested on these houses, all inhabited, but closed from top to bottom.

All this work was performed without any hindrance, in less than an hour, and without this handful of bold men seeing a single bear-skin cap or a single bayonet make their appearance. The very bourgeois who still ventured at this hour of riot to enter the Rue Saint-Denis, cast a glance at the Rue de la Chanvrerie, caught sight of the barricade, and redoubled their pace.

The two barricades being finished, and the flag run up, a table was dragged out of the wine-shop; and Courfeyrac mounted on the table. Enjolras brought the square coffer, and Courfeyrac

opened it. This coffer was filled with cartridges. When the mob saw the cartridges, a tremor ran through the bravest, and a momentary silence ensued.

Courfeyrac distributed them with a smile.

Each one received thirty cartridges. Many had powder, and set about making others with the bullets which they had run. As for the barrel of powder, it stood on a table on one side, near the door, and was held in reserve.

The alarm beat which ran through all Paris, did not cease, but it had finally come to be nothing more than a monotonous noise to which they no longer paid any attention. This noise retreated at times, and again drew near, with melancholy undulations.

They loaded the guns and carbines, all together, without haste, with solemn gravity. Enjolras went and stationed three sentinels outside the barricades, one in the Rue de la Chanvrière, the second in the Rue des Prêcheurs, the third at the corner of the Rue de la Petite Truanderie.

Then, the barricades having been built, the posts assigned, the guns loaded, the sentinels stationed, they waited, alone in those redoubtable streets through which no one passed any longer, surrounded by those dumb houses which seemed dead and in which no human movement palpitated, enveloped in the deepening shades of twilight which was drawing on, in the midst of that silence through which something could be felt advancing, and which had about it something tragic and terrifying, isolated, armed, determined, and tranquil.

VI. — WAITING.

DURING those hours of waiting, what did they do?

We must needs tell, since this is a matter of history.

While the men made bullets and the women lint, while a large saucepan of melted brass and lead, destined to the bullet-mould smoked over a glowing brazier, while the sentinels watched, weapon in hand, on the barricade, while Enjolras, whom it was impossible to divert, kept an eye on the sentinels, Combeferre, Courfeyrac, Jean Prouvaire, Feuilly, Bossuet, Joly, Bahorel, and some others, sought each other out and united as in the most peaceful days of their conversations in their student life, and, in one corner of this wine-shop which had been converted into a casement, a couple of paces distant from the redoubt which they had built, with their carbines loaded and primed

resting against the backs of their chairs, these fine young fellows, so close to a supreme hour, began to recite love verses.

What verses? These :—

Vous rappelez-vous notre douce vie,
Lorsque nous étions si jeunes tous deux,
Et que nous n'avions au cœur d'autre envie
Que d'être bien mis et d'être amoureux,

Lorsqu'en ajoutant votre age à mon age,
Nous ne comptions pas à deux quarante ans,
Et que, dans notre humble et petit ménage,
Tout, même l'hiver, nous était printemps ?

Beaux jours ! Manuel était fier et sage,
Paris s'asseyait à de saints banquets,
Foy lançait la foudre, et votre corsage
Avait une épingle où je me piquais.

Tout vous contemplait. Avocat sans causes,
Quand je vous menais au Prado diner,
Vous étiez jolie au point que les roses
Me faisaient l'effet de se retourner.

Je les entendais dire : Est elle belle !
Comme elle sent bon ! Quels cheveux à flots !
Sous son mantelet elle cache une aile,
Son bonnet charmant est à peine éclos.

J'errais avec toi, pressant ton bras souple.
Les passants croaient que l'amour charmé
Avait marié, dans notre heureux couple,
Le doux mois d'avril au beau mois de mai.

Nous vivions cachés, contents, porte close,
Dévorant l'amour, bon fruit défendu,
Ma bouche n'avait pas dit une chose
Que déjà ton cœur avait répondu.

La Sorbonne était l'endroit bucolique
Où je t'adorais du soir au matin.
C'est ainsi qu'une âme amoureuse applique
La carte du Tendre au pays Latin.

Ô place Maubert ! ô place Dauphine !
Quand, dans le taudis frais et printanier,
Tu tirais ton bas sur ton jambe fine,
Je voyais un astre au fond du grenier.

J'ai fort lu Platon, mais rien ne m'en reste ;
Mieux que Malebranche et que Lamennais
Tu me démontrais la bonté céleste
Avec une fleur que tu me donnais.

Je t'obéissais, tu m'étais soumise;
 O grenier doré! te lacer! te voir
 Aller et venir dès l'aube en chemise,
 Mirant ton jeune front à ton vieux miroir!

Et qui donc pourrait perdre la mémoire
 De ces temps d'aurore et de firmament,
 De rubans, de fleurs, de gaze et de moire,
 Où l'amour bégaye un argot charmant?

Nos jardins étaient un pot de tulipe;
 Tu masquais la vitre avec un jupon;
 Je prenais le bol de terre de pipe,
 Et je te donnais le tasse en japon.

Et ces grands malheurs qui nous faisaient rire!
 Ton manchon brûlé, ton boa perdu!
 Et ce cher portrait du divin Shakespeare
 Qu'un soir pour souper nous avons vendu!

J'étais mendiant et toi charitable.
 Je baisais au vol tes bras frais et ronds.
 Dante in folio nous servait de table
 Pour manger gaîment un cent de marrons.

La première fois qu'en mon joyeux bouge
 Je pris un baiser à ton lèvres en feu,
 Quand tu t'en allais décoiffée et rouge,
 Je restai tout pâle et je crus en Dieu!

Te rappelles-tu nos bonheurs sans nombre,
 Et tous ces fichus changés en chiffons?
 Oh que de soupirs, de nos cœurs pleins d'ombre,
 Se sont envolés dans les cieux profonds!¹

¹Do you remember our sweet life, when we were both so young, and when we had no other desire in our hearts than to be well dressed and in love? When, by adding your age to my age, we could not count forty years between us, and when, in our humble and tiny household, everything was spring to us even in winter. Fair days! Manuel was proud and wise, Paris sat at sacred banquets, Foy launched thunderbolts, and your corsage had a pin on which I pricked myself. Everything gazed upon you. A briefless lawyer, when I took you to the Prado to dine, you were so beautiful that the roses seemed to me to turn round, and I heard them say: Is she not beautiful! How good she smells! What billowing hair! Beneath her mantle she hides a wing. Her charming bonnet is hardly unfolded. I wandered with thee, pressing thy supple arm. The passers-by thought that love bewitched had wedded, in our happy couple, the gentle month of April to the fair month of May. We lived concealed, content, with closed doors, devouring love, that sweet forbidden fruit. My mouth had not uttered a thing when thy heart had already responded. The Sorbonne was the bucolic spot where I adored thee from eve till morn. 'Tis thus that an amorous soul applies the chart of the Tender to the Latin country. O Place Maubert! O Place Dauphine! When in the fresh spring-like hut thou didst draw thy stocking on thy delicate leg, I saw a star in the depths of the garret. I have read a great deal of Plato, but nothing of it remains by me; better than Malebranche and than Lamennais thou didst demonstrate to me celestial goodness with a flower which thou gavest to me, I obeyed thee, thou didst submit to me; oh gilded garret! to lace thee! to behold thee going

The hour, the spot, these souvenirs of youth recalled, a few stars which began to twinkle in the sky, the funeral repose of those deserted streets, the imminence of the inexorable adventure which was in preparation, gave a pathetic charm to these verses murmured in a low tone in the dusk by Jean Prouvaire, who, as we have said, was a gentle poet.

In the meantime, a lamp had been lighted in the small barricade, and in the large one, one of those wax torches such as are to be met with on Shrove-Tuesday in front of vehicles loaded with masks, on their way to la Courtille. These torches, as the reader has seen, came from the Faubourg Saint-Antoine.

The torch had been placed in a sort of cage of paving-stones closed on three sides to shelter it from the wind, and disposed in such a fashion that all the light fell on the flag. The street and the barricade remained sunk in gloom, and nothing was to be seen except the red flag formidably illuminated as by an enormous dark-lantern.

This light enhanced the scarlet of the flag, with an indescribable and terrible purple.

VII. — THE MAN RECRUITED IN THE RUE DES BILLETES.

NIGHT was fully come, nothing made its appearance. All that they heard was confused noises, and at intervals, fusillades; but these were rare, badly sustained and distant. This respite, which was thus prolonged, was a sign that the Government was taking its time, and collecting its forces. These fifty men were waiting for sixty thousand.

Enjolras felt attacked by that impatience which seizes on strong souls on the threshold of redoubtable events. He went in search of Gavroche, who had set to making cartridges in the tap-room, by the dubious light of two candles placed on the

and coming from dawn in thy chemise, gazing at thy young brow in thine ancient mirror! And who, then, would forego the memory of those days of aurora and the firmament, of flowers, of gauze and of moire. when love stammers a charming slang? Our gardens consisted of a pot of tulips; thou didst mask the window with thy petticoat; I took the earthenware bowl and I gave thee the Japanese cup. And those great misfortunes which made us laugh! Thy cuff scorched, thy boa lost! And that dear portrait of the divine Shakespeare which we sold one evening that we might sup! I was a beggar and thou wert charitable. I kissed thy fresh round arms in haste. A folio Danto served us as a table on which to eat merrily a centime's worth of chestnuts. The first time that, in my joyous den, I snatched a kiss from thy fiery lip, when thou wentest forth, dishevelled and blushing, I turned deathly pale and I believed in God. Dost thou recall our innumerable joys, and all those fichus changed to rags? Oh! what sighs from our hearts full of gloom fluttered forth to the heavenly depths!

counter by way of precaution, on account of the powder which was scattered on the tables. These two candles cast no gleam outside. The insurgents had, moreover, taken pains not to have any light in the upper stories.

Gavroche was deeply preoccupied at that moment, but not precisely with his cartridges. The man of the Rue des Billettes had just entered the tap-room and had seated himself at the table which was the least lighted. A musket of large model had fallen to his share, and he held it between his legs. Gavroche, who had been, up to that moment, distracted by a hundred "amusing" things, had not even seen this man.

When he entered, Gavroche followed him mechanically with his eyes, admiring his gun; then, all at once, when the man was seated, the street urchin sprang to his feet. Any one who had spied upon that man up to that moment, would have seen that he was observing everything in the barricade and in the band of insurgents, with singular attention; but, from the moment when he had entered this room, he had fallen into a sort of brown study, and no longer seemed to see anything that was going on. The gamin approached this pensive personage, and began to step around him on tiptoe, as one walks in the vicinity of a person whom one is afraid of waking. At the same time, over his childish countenance, which was, at once so impudent and so serious, so giddy and so profound, so gay and so heart-breaking, passed all those grimaces of an old man which signify: Ah bah! impossible! My sight is bad! I am dreaming! can this be? no, it is not! but yes! why, no! etc. Gavroche balanced on his heels, clenched both fists in his pockets, moved his neck around like a bird, expended in a gigantic pout all the sagacity of his lower lip. He was astounded, uncertain, incredulous, convinced, dazzled. He had the mien of the chief of the eunuchs in the slave mart, discovering a Venus among the blowsy females, and the air of an amateur recognizing a Raphael in a heap of daubs. His whole being was at work, the instinct which scents out, and the intelligence which combines. It was evident that a great event had happened in Gavroche's life.

It was at the most intense point of this preoccupation that Enjolras accosted him.

"You are small," said Enjolras, "you will not be seen. Go out of the barricade, slip along close to the houses, skirmish about a bit in the streets, and come back and tell me what is going on."

Gavroche raised himself on his haunches.

"So the little chaps are good for something! that's very lucky! I'll go! In the meanwhile, trust to the little fellows, and distrust the big ones." And Gavroche, raising his head and lowering his voice, added, as he indicated the man of the Rue des Billettes:—

"Do you see that big fellow there?"

"Well?"

"He's a police spy."

"Are you sure of it?"

"It isn't two weeks since he pulled me off the cornice of the Port Royal, where I was taking the air, by my ear."

Enjolras hastily quitted the urchin and murmured a few words in a very low tone to a longshoreman from the wine-docks who chanced to be at hand. The man left the room, and returned almost immediately, accompanied by three others. The four men, four porters with broad shoulders, went and placed themselves without doing anything to attract his attention, behind the table on which the man of the Rue des Billettes was leaning with his elbows. They were evidently ready to hurl themselves upon him.

Then Enjolras approached the man and demanded of him:—

"Who are you?"

At this abrupt query, the man started. He plunged his gaze deep into Enjolras' clear eyes and appeared to grasp the latter's meaning. He smiled with a smile than which nothing more disdainful, more energetic, and more resolute could be seen in the world, and replied with haughty gravity:—

"I see what it is. Well, yes!"

"You are a police spy?"

"I am an agent of the authorities."

"And your name?"

"Javert."

Enjolras made a sign to the four men. In the twinkling of an eye, before Javert had time to turn round, he was collared, thrown down, pinioned and searched.

They found on him a little round card pasted between two pieces of glass, and bearing on one side the arms of France, engraved, and with this motto: *Supervision and vigilance*, and on the other this note: "JAVERT, inspector of police, aged fifty-two," and the signature of the Prefect of Police of that day, M. Gisquet.

Besides this, he had his watch and his purse, which contained several gold pieces. They left him his purse and his watch. Under the watch, at the bottom of his fob, they felt and seized

a paper in an envelope, which Enjolras unfolded, and on which he read these five lines, written in the very hand of the Prefect of Police : —

“As soon as his political mission is accomplished, Inspector Javert will make sure, by special supervision, whether it is true that the malefactors have instituted intrigues on the right bank of the Seine, near the Jena bridge.”

The search ended, they lifted Javert to his feet, bound his arms behind his back, and fastened him to that celebrated post in the middle of the room which had formerly given the wine-shop its name.

Gavroche, who had looked on at the whole of this scene and had approved of everything with a silent toss of his head, stepped up to Javert and said to him : —

“It’s the mouse who has caught the cat.”

All this was so rapidly executed, that it was all over when those about the wine-shop noticed it.

Javert had not uttered a single cry.

At the sight of Javert bound to the post, Courfeyrac, Bossuet, Joly, Combeferre, and the men scattered over the two barricades came running up.

Javert, with his back to the post, and so surrounded with ropes that he could not make a movement, raised his head with the intrepid serenity of the man who has never lied.

“He is a police spy,” said Enjolras.

And turning to Javert : “You will be shot ten minutes before the barricade is taken.”

Javert replied in his most imperious tone : —

“Why not at once?”

“We are saving our powder.”

“Then finish the business with a blow from a knife.”

“Spy,” said the handsome Enjolras, “we are judges and not assassins.”

Then he called Gavroche : —

“Here you ! go about your business ! Do what I told you !”

“I’m going !” cried Gavroche.

And halting as he was on the point of setting out : —

“By the way, you will give me his gun !” and he added : “I leave you the musician, but I want the clarinet.”

The gamin made the military salute and passed gayly through the opening in the large barricade.

VIII. — MANY INTERROGATION POINTS WITH REGARD TO A CERTAIN LE CABUC WHOSE NAME MAY NOT HAVE BEEN LE CABUC.

THE tragic picture which we have undertaken would not be complete, the reader would not see these grand moments of social birth-pangs in a revolutionary birth, which contain convulsion mingled with effort, in their exact and real relief, were we to omit, in the sketch here outlined, an incident full of epic and savage horror which occurred almost immediately after Gavroche's departure.

Mobs, as the reader knows, are like a snowball, and collect as they roll along, a throng of tumultuous men. These men do not ask each other whence they come. Among the passers-by who had joined the rabble led by Enjolras, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac, there had been a person wearing the jacket of a street porter, which was very threadbare on the shoulders, who gesticulated and vociferated, and who had the look of a drunken savage. This man, whose name or nickname was Le Cabuc, and who was, moreover, an utter stranger to those who pretended to know him, was very drunk, or assumed the appearance of being so, and had seated himself with several others at a table which they had dragged outside of the wine-shop. This Cabuc, while making those who vied with him drunk, seemed to be examining with a thoughtful air the large house at the extremity of the barricade, whose five stories commanded the whole street and faced the Rue Saint-Denis. All at once he exclaimed:—

"Do you know, comrades, it is from that house yonder that we must fire. When we are at the windows, the deuce is in it if any one can advance into the street!"

"Yes, but the house is closed," said one of the drinkers.

"Let us knock!"

"They will not open."

"Let us break in the door!"

Le Cabuc runs to the door, which had a very massive knocker, and knocks. The door opens not. He strikes a second blow. No one answers. A third stroke. The same silence

"Is there any one here?" shouts Cabuc.

Nothing stirs.

Then he seizes a gun and begins to batter the door with the butt end.

It was an ancient alley door, low, vaulted, narrow, solid, entirely of oak, lined on the inside with a sheet of iron and

iron stays, a genuine prison postern. The blows from the butt end of the gun made the house tremble, but did not shake the door.

Nevertheless, it is probable that the inhabitants were disturbed, for a tiny, square window was finally seen to open on the third story, and at this aperture appeared the reverend and terrified face of a gray-haired old man, who was the porter, and who held a candle.

The man who was knocking paused.

"Gentlemen," said the porter, "what do you want?"

"Open!" said Cabuc.

"That cannot be, gentlemen."

"Open, nevertheless."

"Impossible, gentlemen."

Le Cabuc took his gun and aimed at the porter; but as he was below, and as it was very dark, the porter did not see him.

"Will you open, yes or no?"

"No, gentlemen."

"Do you say no?"

"I say no, my good —"

The porter did not finish. The shot was fired; the ball entered under his chin and came out at the nape of his neck, after traversing the jugular vein.

The old man fell back without a sigh. The candle fell and was extinguished, and nothing more was to be seen except a motionless head lying on the sill of the small window, and a little whitish smoke which floated off towards the roof.

"There!" said Le Cabuc, dropping the butt end of his gun to the pavement.

He had hardly uttered this word, when he felt a hand laid on his shoulder with the weight of an eagle's talon, and he heard a voice saying to him:—

"On your knees."

The murderer turned round and saw before him Enjolras' cold, white face.

Enjolras held a pistol in his hand.

He had hastened up at the sound of the discharge.

He had seized Cabuc's collar, blouse, shirt, and suspender with his left hand.

"On your knees!" he repeated.

And, with an imperious motion, the frail young man of twenty years bent the thickset and sturdy porter like a reed, and brought him to his knees in the mire.

Le Cabuc attempted to resist, but he seemed to have been seized by a superhuman hand.

Enjolras, pale, with bare neck and dishevelled hair, and his woman's face, had about him at that moment something of the antique Themis. His dilated nostrils, his downcast eyes, gave to his implacable Greek profile that expression of wrath and that expression of Chastity which, as the ancient world viewed the matter, befit Justice.

The whole barricade hastened up, then all ranged themselves in a circle at a distance, feeling that it was impossible to utter a word in the presence of the thing which they were about to behold.

Le Cabuc, vanquished, no longer tried to struggle, and trembled in every limb.

Enjolras released him and drew out his watch.

"Collect yourself," said he. "Think or pray. You have one minute."

"Mercy!" murmured the murderer; then he dropped his head and stammered a few inarticulate oaths.

Enjolras never took his eyes off of him: he allowed a minute to pass, then he replaced his watch in his fob. That done, he grasped Le Cabuc by the hair, as the latter coiled himself into a ball at his knees and shrieked, and placed the muzzle of the pistol to his ear. Many of those intrepid men, who had so tranquilly entered upon the most terrible of adventures, turned aside their heads.

An explosion was heard, the assassin fell to the pavement face downwards.

Enjolras straightened himself up, and cast a convinced and severe glance around him. Then he spurned the corpse with his foot and said:—

"Throw that outside."

Three men raised the body of the unhappy wretch, which was still agitated by the last mechanical convulsions of the life that had fled, and flung it over the little barricade into the Rue Mondétour.

Enjolras was thoughtful. It is impossible to say what grandiose shadows slowly spread over his redoubtable serenity. All at once he raised his voice.

A silence fell upon them.

"Citizens," said Enjolras, "what that man did is frightful, what I have done is horrible. He killed, therefore I killed him. I had to do it, because insurrection must have its discipline. Assassination is even more of a crime here than elsewhere; we are under the eyes of the Revolution, we are the priests of the Republic, we are the victims of duty, and must not be possible

to slander our combat. I have, therefore, tried that man, and condemned him to death. As for myself, constrained as I am to do what I have done, and yet abhorring it, I have judged myself also, and you shall soon see to what I have condemned myself."

Those who listened to him shuddered.

"We will share thy fate," cried Combeferre.

"So be it," replied Enjolras. "One word more. In executing this man, I have obeyed necessity; but necessity is a monster of the old world, necessity's name is Fatality. Now, the law of progress is, that monsters shall disappear before the angels, and that Fatality shall vanish before Fraternity. It is a bad moment to pronounce the word love. No matter, I do pronounce it. And I glorify it. Love, the future is thine. Death, I make use of thee, but I hate thee. Citizens, in the future there will be neither darkness nor thunderbolts; neither ferocious ignorance, nor bloody retaliation. As there will be no more Satan, there will be no more Michael. In the future no one will kill any one else, the earth will beam with radiance, the human race will love. The day will come, citizens, when all will be concord, harmony, light, joy and life; it will come, and it is in order that it may come that we are about to die."

Enjolras ceased. His virgin lips closed; and he remained for some time standing on the spot where he had shed blood, in marble immobility. His staring eye caused those about him to speak in low tones.

Jean Prouvaire and Combeferre pressed each other's hands silently, and, leaning against each other in an angle of the barricade, they watched with an admiration in which there was some compassion, that grave young man, executioner and priest, composed of light, like crystal, and also of rock.

Let us say at once that later on, after the action, when the bodies were taken to the morgue and searched, a police agent's card was found on Le Cabuc. The author of this book had in his hands, in 1848, the special report on this subject made to the Prefect of Police in 1832.

We will add, that if we are to believe a tradition of the police, which is strange but probably well founded, Le Cabuc was Claquesous. The fact is, that dating from the death of Le Cabuc, there was no longer any question of Claquesous. Claquesous had nowhere left any trace of his disappearance; he would seem to have amalgamated himself with the invisible. His life had been all shadows, his end was night.

The whole insurgent group was still under the influence of the

emotion of that tragic case which had been so quickly tried and so quickly terminated, when Courfeyrac again beheld on the barricade, the small young man who had inquired of him that morning for Marius.

This lad, who had a bold and reckless air, had come by night to join the insurgents.



BOOK THIRTEENTH. — MARIUS ENTERS THE SHADOW.

I. — FROM THE RUE PLUMET TO THE QUARTIER SAINT-DENIS.

THE voice which had summoned Marius through the twilight to the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, had produced on him the effect of the voice of destiny. He wished to die; the opportunity presented itself; he knocked at the door of the tomb, a hand in the darkness offered him the key. These melancholy openings which take place in the gloom before despair, are tempting. Marius thrust aside the bar which had so often allowed him to pass, emerged from the garden, and said: "I will go."

Mad with grief, no longer conscious of anything fixed or solid in his brain, incapable of accepting anything thenceforth of fate after those two months passed in the intoxication of youth and love, overwhelmed at once by all the reveries of despair, he had but one desire remaining, to make a speedy end of all.

He set out at rapid pace. He found himself most opportunely armed, as he had Javert's pistols with him.

The young man of whom he thought that he had caught a glimpse, had vanished from his sight in the street.

Marius, who had emerged from the Rue Plumet by the boulevard, traversed the Esplanade and the bridge of the Invalides, the Champs Élysées, the Place Louis XV., and reached the Rue de Rivoli. The shops were open there, the gas was burning under the arcades, women were making their purchases in the stalls, people were eating ices in the Café Laiter, and nibbling small cakes at the English pastry-cook's shop. Only a few posting-chaises were setting out at a gallop from the Hôtel des Princes and the Hôtel Meurice.

Marius entered the Rue Saint-Honoré through the Passage

Delorme. There the shops were closed, the merchants were chatting in front of their half-open doors, people were walking about, the street lanterns were lighted, beginning with the first floor, all the windows were lighted as usual. There was cavalry on the Place du Palais-Royal.

Marius followed the Rue Saint-Honoré. In proportion as he left the Palais-Royal behind him, there were fewer lighted windows, the shops were fast shut, no one was chatting on the thresholds, the street grew sombre, and, at the same time, the crowd increased in density. For the passers-by now amounted to a crowd. No one could be seen to speak in this throng, and yet there arose from it a dull, deep murmur.

Near the fountain of the Arbre-Sec, there were "assemblages" motionless and gloomy groups which were to those who went and came as stones in the midst of running water.

At the entrance to the Rue des Prouvaires, the crowd no longer walked. It formed a resisting, massive, solid, compact, almost impenetrable block of people who were huddled together, and conversing in low tones. There were hardly any black coats or round hats now, but smock frocks, blouses, caps, and bristling and cadaverous heads. This multitude undulated confusedly in the nocturnal gloom. Its whisperings had the hoarse accent of a vibration. Although not one of them was walking, a dull trampling was audible in the mire. Beyond this dense portion of the throng, in the Rue du Roule, in the Rue des Prouvaires, and in the extension of the Rue Saint-Honoré, there was no longer a single window in which a candle was burning. Only the solitary and diminishing rows of lanterns could be seen vanishing into the street in the distance. The lanterns of that date resembled large red stars, hanging to ropes, and shed upon the pavement a shadow which had the form of a huge spider. These streets were not deserted. There could be descried piles of guns, moving bayonets, and troops bivouacking. No curious observer passed that limit. There circulation ceased. There the rabble ended and the army began.

Marius willed with the will of a man who hopes no more. He had been summoned, he must go. He found a means to traverse the throng and to pass the bivouac of the troops, he shunned the patrols, he avoided the sentinels. He made a circuit, reached the Rue de Béthisy, and directed his course towards the Halles. At the corner of the Rue des Bourdonnais, there were no longer any lanterns.

After having passed the zone of the crowd, he had passed the limits of the troops; he found himself in something startling.

There was no longer a passer-by, no longer a soldier, no longer a light, there was no one; solitude, silence, night, I know not what chill which seized hold upon one. Entering a street was like entering a cellar.

He continued to advance.

He took a few steps. Some one passed close to him at a run. Was it a man? Or a woman? Were there many of them? he could not have told. It had passed and vanished.

Proceeding from circuit to circuit, he reached a lane which he judged to be the Rue de la Poterie; near the middle of this street, he came in contact with an obstacle. He extended his hands. It was an overturned wagon; his foot recognized pools of water, gullies, and paving-stones scattered and piled up. A barricade had been begun there and abandoned. He climbed over the stones and found himself on the other side of the barrier. He walked very near the street-posts, and guided himself along the walls of the houses. A little beyond the barricade, it seemed to him that he could make out something white in front of him. He approached, it took on a form. It was two white horses; the horses of the omnibus harnessed by Bossuet in the morning, who had been straying at random all day from street to street, and had finally halted there, with the weary patience of brutes who no more understand the actions of men, than man understands the actions of Providence.

Marius left the horses behind him. As he was approaching a street which seemed to him to be the Rue du Contrat-Social, a shot coming no one knows whence, and traversing the darkness at random, whistled close by him, and the bullet pierced a brass shaving-dish suspended above his head over a hair-dresser's shop. This pierced shaving-dish was still to be seen in 1848, in the Rue du Contrat-Social, at the corner of the pillars of the market.

This shot still betokened life. From that instant forth he encountered nothing more.

The whole of this itinerary resembled a descent of black steps. Nevertheless, Marius pressed forwards.

II. — AN OWL'S VIEW OF PARIS.

A BEING who could have hovered over Paris that night with the wing of the bat or the owl would have had beneath his eyes a gloomy spectacle.

All that old quarter of the Halles, which is like a city within a city, through which run the Rues Saint-Denis and Saint-Martin, where a thousand lanes cross, and of which the insurgents had

made their redoubt and their stronghold, would have appeared to him like a dark and enormous cavity hollowed out in the centre of Paris. There the glance fell into an abyss. Thanks to the broken lanterns, thanks to the closed windows, there all radiance, all life, all sound, all movement ceased. The invisible police of the insurrection were on the watch everywhere, and maintained order, that is to say, night. The necessary tactics of insurrection are to drown small numbers in a vast obscurity, to multiply every combatant by the possibilities which that obscurity contains. At dusk, every window where a candle was burning received a shot. The light was extinguished, sometimes the inhabitant was killed. Hence nothing was stirring. There was nothing but fright, mourning, stupor in the houses; and in the streets, a sort of sacred horror. Not even the long rows of windows and stores, the indentations of the chimneys, and the roofs, and the vague reflections which are cast back by the wet and muddy pavements, were visible. An eye cast upward at that mass of shadows might, perhaps, have caught a glimpse here and there, at intervals, of indistinct gleams which brought out broken and eccentric lines, and profiles of singular buildings, something like the lights which go and come in ruins; it was at such points that the barricades were situated. The rest was a lake of obscurity, foggy, heavy, and funereal, above which, in motionless and melancholy outlines, rose the tower of Saint-Jacques, the church of Saint-Merry, and two or three more of those grand edifices of which man makes giants and the night makes phantoms.

All around this deserted and disquieting labyrinth, in the quarters where the Parisian circulation had not been annihilated, and where a few street lanterns still burned, the aerial observer might have distinguished the metallic gleam of swords and bayonets, the dull rumble of artillery, and the swarming of silent battalions whose ranks were swelling from minute to minute; a formidable girdle which was slowly drawing in and around the insurrection.

The invested quarter was no longer anything more than a monstrous cavern; everything there appeared to be asleep or motionless, and, as we have just seen, any street which one might come to offered nothing but darkness.

A wild darkness, full of traps, full of unseen and formidable shocks, into which it was alarming to penetrate, and in which it was terrible to remain, where those who entered shivered before those whom they awaited, where those who waited shuddered before those who were coming. Invisible combatants were

intrenched at every corner of the street; snares of the sepulchre concealed in the density of night. All was over. No more light was to be hoped for, henceforth, except the lightning of guns, no further encounter except the abrupt and rapid apparition of death. Where? How? When? No one knew, but it was certain and inevitable. In this place which had been marked out for the struggle, the Government and the insurrection, the National Guard, and popular societies, the bourgeois and the uprising, groping their way, were about to come into contact. The necessity was the same for both. The only possible issue thenceforth was to emerge thence killed or conquerors. A situation so extreme, an obscurity so powerful, that the most timid felt themselves seized with resolution, and the most daring with terror.

Moreover, on both sides, the fury, the rage, and the determination were equal. For the one party, to advance meant death, and no one dreamed of retreating; for the other, to remain meant death, and no one dreamed of flight.

It was indispensable that all should be ended on the following day, that triumph should rest either here or there, that the insurrection should prove itself a revolution or a skirmish. The Government understood this as well as the parties; the most insignificant bourgeois felt it. Hence a thought of anguish which mingled with the impenetrable gloom of this quarter where all was at the point of being decided; hence a redoubled anxiety around that silence whence a catastrophe was on the point of emerging. Here only one sound was audible, a sound as heart-rending as the death rattle, as menacing as a malediction, the tocsin of Saint-Merry. Nothing could be more blood-curdling than the clamor of that wild and desperate bell, wailing amid the shadows.

As it often happens, nature seemed to have fallen into accord with what men were about to do. Nothing disturbed the harmony of the whole effect. The stars had disappeared, heavy clouds filled the horizon with their melancholy folds. A black sky rested on these dead streets, as though an immense winding-sheet were being outspread over this immense tomb.

While a battle that was still wholly political was in preparation in the same locality which had already witnessed so many revolutionary events, while youth, the secret associations, the schools, in the name of principles, and the middle classes, in the name of interests, were approaching preparatory to dashing themselves together, clasping and throwing each other, while each one hastened and invited the last and decisive hour of the

crisis, far away and quite outside of this fatal quarter, in the most profound depths of the unfathomable cavities of that wretched old Paris which disappears under the splendor of happy and opulent Paris, the sombre voice of the people could be heard giving utterance to a dull roar.

A fearful and sacred voice which is composed of the roar of the brute and of the word of God, which terrifies the weak and which warns the wise, which comes both from below like the voice of the lion, and from on high like the voice of the thunder.

III.—THE EXTREME EDGE.

MARIUS had reached the Halles.

There everything was still calmer, more obscure and more motionless than in the neighboring streets. One would have said that the glacial peace of the sepulchre had sprung forth from the earth and had spread over the heavens.

Nevertheless, a red glow brought out against this black background the lofty roofs of the houses which barred the Rue de la Chanvrière on the Saint-Eustache side. It was the reflection of the torch which was burning in the Corinthe barricade. Marius directed his steps towards that red light. It had drawn him to the Marché-aux-Poirées, and he caught a glimpse of the dark mouth of the Rue des Prêcheurs. He entered it. The insurgents' sentinel, who was guarding the other end, did not see him. He felt that he was very close to that which he had come in search of, and he walked on tiptoe. In this manner he reached the elbow of that short section of the Rue Mondétour which was, as the reader will remember, the only communication which Enjolras had preserved with the outside world. At the corner of the last house, on his left, he thrust his head forward, and looked into the fragment of the Rue Mondétour.

A little beyond the angle of the lane and the Rue de la Chanvrière which cast a broad curtain of shadow, in which he was himself engulfed, he perceived some light on the pavement, a bit of the wine-shop, and beyond, a flickering lamp within a sort of shapeless wall, and men crouching down with guns on their knees. All this was ten fathoms distant from him. It was the interior of the barricade.

The houses which bordered the lane on the right concealed the rest of the wine-shop, the large barricade, and the flag from him.

Marius had but a step more to take.

Then the unhappy young man seated himself on a post, folded his arms, and fell to thinking about his father.

He thought of that heroic Colonel Pontmercy, who had been so proud a soldier, who had guarded the frontier of France under the Republic, and had touched the frontier of Asia under Napoleon, who had beheld Genoa, Alexandria, Milan, Turin, Madrid, Vienna, Dresden, Berlin, Moscow, who had left on all the victorious battle-fields of Europe drops of that same blood, which he, Marius, had in his veins, who had grown gray before his time in discipline and command, who had lived with his sword-belt buckled, his epaulets falling on his breast, his cockade blackened with powder, his brow furrowed with his helmet, in barracks, in camp, in the bivouac, in ambulances, and who, at the expiration of twenty years, had returned from the great wars with a scarred cheek, a smiling countenance, tranquil, admirable, pure as a child, having done everything for France and nothing against her.

He said to himself that his day had also come now, that his hour had struck, that following his father, he too was about to show himself brave, intrepid, bold, to run to meet the bullets, to offer his breast to bayonets, to shed his blood, to seek the enemy, to seek death, that he was about to wage war in his turn and descend to the field of battle, and that the field of battle upon which he was to descend was the street, and that the war in which he was about to engage was civil war!

He beheld civil war laid open like a gulf before him, and into this he was about to fall. Then he shuddered.

He thought of his father's sword, which his grandfather had sold to a second-hand dealer, and which he had so mournfully regretted. He said to himself that that chaste and valiant sword had done well to escape from him, and to depart in wrath into the gloom; that if it had thus fled, it was because it was intelligent and because it had foreseen the future; that it had had a presentiment of this rebellion, the war of the gutters, the war of the pavements, fusilades through cellar-windows, blows given and received in the rear; it was because, coming from Marengo and Friedland, it did not wish to go to the Rue de la Chanvrerie; it was because, after what it had done with the father, it did not wish to do this for the son! He told himself that if that sword were there, if after taking possession of it at his father's pillow, he had dared to take it and carry it off for this combat of darkness between Frenchmen in the streets, it would assuredly have scorched his hands and burst out aflame before his eyes, like the sword of the angel! He told himself that it was fortunate that

it was not there and that it had disappeared, that that was well, that that was just, that his grandfather had been the true guardian of his father's glory, and that it was far better that the colonel's sword should be sold at auction, sold to the old-clothes man, thrown among the old junk, than that it should, to-day, wound the side of his country.

And then he fell to weeping bitterly.

This was horrible. But what was he to do! Live without Cosette he could not. Since she was gone, he must needs die. Had he not given her his word of honor that he would die? She had gone knowing that; this meant that it pleased her that Marius should die. And then, it was clear that she no longer loved him, since she had departed thus without warning, without a word, without a letter, although she knew his address! What was the good of living, and why should he live now? And then, what! should he retreat after going so far! should he flee from danger after having approached it! should he slip away after having come and peeped into the barricade! slip away, all in a tremble, saying: "After all, I have had enough of it as it is. I have seen it, that suffices, this is civil war, and I shall take my leave!" Should he abandon his friends who were expecting him! Who were in need of him possibly! who were a mere handful against an army! Should he be untrue at once to his love, to country, to his word! Should he give to his cowardice the pretext of patriotism! But this was impossible, and if the phantom of his father was there in the gloom, and beheld him retreating, he would beat him on the loins with the flat of his sword, and shout to him: "March on, you poltroon!"

Thus a prey to the conflicting movements of his thoughts, he dropped his head.

All at once he raised it. A sort of splendid rectification had just been effected in his mind. There is a widening of the sphere of thought which is peculiar to the vicinity of the grave; it makes one see clearly to be near death. The vision of the action into which he felt that he was, perhaps, on the point of entering, appeared to him no more as lamentable, but as superb. The war of the street was suddenly transfigured by some unfathomable inward working of his soul, before the eye of his thought. All the tumultuous interrogation points of revery recurred to him in throngs, but without troubling him. He left none of them unanswered.

Let us see, why should his father be indignant? Are there not cases where insurrection rises to the dignity of duty? What was there that was degrading for the son of Colonel Pontmercy

in the combat which was about to begin? It is no longer Montmirail nor Champaubert; it is something quite different. The question is no longer one of sacred territory,—but of a holy idea. The country wails, that may be, but humanity applauds. But is it true that the country does wail? France bleeds, but liberty smiles; and in the presence of liberty's smile, France forgets her wound. And then if we look at things from a still more lofty point of view, why do we speak of civil war?

Civil war—what does that mean? Is there a foreign war? Is not all war between men war between brothers? War is qualified only by its object. There is no such thing as foreign or civil war; there is only just and unjust war. Unt' that day when the grand human agreement is concluded, war, that at least which is the effort of the future, which is hastening on against the past, which is lagging in the rear, may be necessary. What have we to reproach that war with? War does not become a disgrace, the sword does not become a disgrace, except when it is used for assassinating the right, progress, reason, civilization, truth. Then war, whether foreign or civil, is iniquitous; it is called crime. Outside the pale of that holy thing, justice, by what right does one form of man despise another? By what right should the sword of Washington disown the pike of Camille Desmoulins? Leonidas against the stranger, Timoleon against the tyrant, which is the greater? the one is the defender, the other the liberator. Shall we brand every appeal to arms within a city's limits without taking the object into a consideration? Then note the infamy of Brutus, Marcel, Arnould von Blankenheim, Coligny. Hedgerow war? War of the streets? Why not? That was the war of Ambiorix, of Artevelde, of Marnix, of Pelagius. But Ambiorix fought against Rome, Artevelde against France, Marnix against Spain, Pelagius against the Moors; all against the foreigner. Well, the monarchy is a foreigner; oppression is a stranger; the right divine is a stranger. Despotism violates the moral frontier, an invasion violates the geographical frontier. Driving out the tyrant or driving out the English, in both cases, regaining possession of one's own territory. There comes an hour when protestation no longer suffices; after philosophy, action is required; live force finishes what the idea has sketched out; Prometheus chained begins, Aristogeiton ends; the encyclopedia enlightens souls, the 10th of August electrifies them. After Æschylus, Thrasylus; after Diderot, Danton. Multitudes have a tendency to accept the master. Their mass bears witness to apathy. A crowd is easily led as a whole to obedience. Men must be stirred up, pushed on, treated

roughly by the very benefit of their deliverance, their eyes must be wounded by the true, light must be hurled at them in terrible handfuls. They must be a little thunderstruck themselves at their own well-being; this dazzling awakens them. Hence the necessity of tocsins and wars. Great combatants must rise, must enlighten nations with audacity, and shake up that sad humanity which is covered with gloom by the right divine, Cæsarian glory, force, fanaticism, irresponsible power, and absolute majesty; a rabble stupidly occupied in the contemplation, in their twilight splendor, of these sombre triumphs of the night. Down with the tyrant! Of whom are you speaking? Do you call Louis Philippe the tyrant? No; no more than Louis XVI. Both of them are what history is in the habit of calling good kings; but principles are not to be parcelled out, the logic of the true is rectilinear, the peculiarity of truth is that it lacks complaisance; no concessions, then; all encroachments on man should be repressed. There is a divine right in Louis XVI., there is *because a Bourbon* in Louis Philippe; both represent in a certain measure the confiscation of right, and, in order to clear away universal insurrection, they must be combated; it must be done, France being always the one to begin. When the master falls in France, he falls everywhere. In short, what cause is more just, and consequently, what war is greater, than that which re-establishes social truth, restores her throne to liberty, restores the people to the people, restores sovereignty to man, replaces the purple on the head of France, restores equity and reason in their plenitude, suppresses every germ of antagonism by restoring each one to himself, annihilates the obstacle which royalty presents to the whole immense universal concord, and places the human race once more on a level with the right? These wars build up peace. An enormous fortress of prejudices, privileges, superstitions, lies, exactions, abuses, violences, iniquities, and darkness still stands erect in this world, with its towers of hatred. It must be cast down. This monstrous mass must be made to crumble. To conquer at Austerlitz is grand; to take the Bastille is immense.

There is no one who has not noticed it in his own case—the soul,—and therein lies the marvel of its unity complicated with ubiquity, has a strange aptitude for reasoning almost coldly in the most violent extremities, and it often happens that heart-broken passion and profound despair in the very agony of their blackest monologues, treat subjects and discuss theses. Logic is mingled with convulsion, and the thread of the syllogism floats, without breaking, in the mournful storm of thought. This was the situation of Marius' mind.

As he meditated thus, dejected but resolute, hesitating in every direction, and, in short, shuddering at what he was about to do, his glance strayed to the interior of the barricade. The insurgents were here conversing in a low voice, without moving, and there was perceptible that quasi-silence which marks the last stage of expectation. Overhead, at the small window in the third story, Marius descried a sort of spectator who appeared to him to be singularly attentive. This was the porter who had been killed by Le Cabuc. Below, by the lights of the torch, which was thrust between the paving-stones, this head could be vaguely distinguished. Nothing could be stranger, in that sombre and uncertain gleam, than that livid, motionless, astonished face, with its bristling hair, its eyes fixed and staring, and its yawning mouth, bent over the street in an attitude of curiosity. One would have said that the man who was dead was surveying those who were about to die. A long trail of blood which had flowed from that head, descended in reddish threads from the window to the height of the first floor, where it stopped.



BOOK FOURTEENTH. — THE GRANDEURS OF DESPAIR.

I. — THE FLAG: ACT FIRST.

As yet, nothing had come. Ten o'clock had sounded from Saint-Merry. Enjolras and Combeferre had gone and seated themselves, carbines in hand, near the outlet of the grand barricade. They no longer addressed each other, they listened, seeking to catch even the faintest and most distant sound of marching.

Suddenly, in the midst of the dismal calm, a clear, gay, young voice, which seemed to come from the Rue Saint-Denis, rose and began to sing distinctly, to the old popular air of "By the Light of the Moon," this bit of poetry, terminated by a cry like the crow of a cock:—

Mon nez est en larmes,
Mon ami Bugeaud,
Prête moi tes gendarmes
Pour leur dire un mot.

En capote bleue,
La poule au shako,
Voici la banlieue!
Co-cocorico!¹

They pressed each other's hands.

"That is Gavroche," said Enjolras.

"He is warning us," said Combeferre.

A hasty rush troubled the deserted street; they beheld a being more agile than a clown climb over the omnibus, and Gavroche bounded into the barricade, all breathless, saying:—

"My gun! Here they are!"

An electric quiver shot through the whole barricade, and the sound of hands seeking their guns became audible.

"Would you like my carbine?" said Enjolras to the lad.

"I want a big gun," replied Gavroche.

And he seized Javert's gun.

Two sentinels had fallen back, and had come in almost at the same moment as Gavroche. They were the sentinels from the end of the street, and the vidette of the Rue de la Petite-Truanderie. The vidette of the Lane des Prêcheurs had remained at his post, which indicated that nothing was approaching from the direction of the bridges and Halles.

The Rue de la Chanvrerie, of which a few paving-stones alone were dimly visible in the reflection of the light projected on the flag, offered to the insurgents the aspect of a vast black door vaguely opened into a smoke.

Each man had taken up his position for the conflict.

Forty-three insurgents, among whom were Enjolras, Combeferre, Courfeyrac, Bossuet, Joly, Bahorel, and Gavroche, were kneeling inside the large barricade, with their heads on a level with the crest of the barrier, the barrels of their guns and carbines aimed on the stones as though at loop-holes, attentive, mute, ready to fire. Six, commanded by Feuilly, had installed themselves, with their guns levelled at their shoulders, at the windows of the two stories of Corinthe.

Several minutes passed thus, then a sound of footsteps, measured, heavy, and numerous, became distinctly audible in the direction of Saint-Leu. This sound, faint at first, then precise, then heavy and sonorous, approached slowly, without halt, without intermission, with a tranquil and terrible continuity. Nothing was to be heard but this. It was that com-

¹ My nose is in tears, my friend Bugeaud, lend me thy gendarmes that I may say a word to them. With a blue capote and a chicken in his shako, here's the banlieue, co-cocorico.

bined silence and sound, of the statue of the commander, but this stony step had something indescribably enormous and multiple about it which awakened the idea of a throng, and, at the same time, the idea of a spectre. One thought one heard the terrible statue Legion marching onward. This tread drew near; it drew still nearer, and stopped. It seemed as though the breathing of many men could be heard at the end of the street. Nothing was to be seen, however, but at the bottom of that dense obscurity there could be distinguished a multitude of metallic threads, as fine as needles and almost imperceptible, which moved about like those indescribable phosphoric networks which one sees beneath one's closed eyelids, in the first mists of slumber at the moment when one is dropping off to sleep. These were bayonets and gun-barrels confusedly illuminated by the distant reflection of the torch.

A pause ensued, as though both sides were waiting. All at once, from the depths of this darkness, a voice, which was all the more sinister, since no one was visible, and which appeared to be the gloom itself speaking, shouted:—

“Who goes there?”

At the same time, the click of guns, as they were lowered into position, was heard.

Enjolras replied in a haughty and vibrating tone:—

“The French Revolution!”

“Fire!” shouted the voice.

A flash empurpled all the façades in the street as though the door of a furnace had been flung open, and hastily closed again.

A fearful detonation burst forth on the barricade. The red flag fell. The discharge had been so violent and so dense that it had cut the staff, that is to say, the very tip of the omnibus pole.

Bullets which had rebounded from the cornices of the houses penetrated the barricade and wounded several men.

The impression produced by this first discharge was freezing. The attack had been rough, and of a nature to inspire reflection in the boldest. It was evident that they had to deal with an entire regiment at the very least.

“Comrades!” shouted Courfeyrac, “let us not waste our powder. Let us wait until they are in the street before replying.”

“And, above all,” said Enjolras, “let us raise the flag again.”

He picked up the flag, which had fallen precisely at his feet. Outside, the clatter of the ramrods in the guns could be heard; the troops were re-loading their arms.

Enjolras went on:—

“Who is there here with a bold heart? Who will plant the flag on the barricade again?”

Not a man responded. To mount on the barricade at the very moment when, without any doubt, it was again the object of their aim, was simply death. The bravest hesitated to pronounce his own condemnation. Enjolras himself felt a thrill. He repeated:—

“Does no one volunteer?”

II. — THE FLAG: ACT SECOND.

SINCE they had arrived at Corinthe, and had begun the construction of the barricade, no attention had been paid to Father Mabeuf. M. Mabeuf had not quitted the mob, however; he had entered the ground-floor of the wine-shop and had seated himself behind the counter. There he had, so to speak, retreated into himself. He no longer seemed to look or to think. Courfeyrac and others had accosted him two or three times, warning him of his peril, beseeching him to withdraw, but he did not hear them. When they were not speaking to him, his mouth moved as though he were replying to some one, and as soon as he was addressed, his lips became motionless and his eyes no longer had the appearance of being alive.

Several hours before the barricade was attacked, he had assumed an attitude which he did not afterwards abandon, with both fists planted on his knees and his head thrust forward as though he were gazing over a precipice. Nothing had been able to move him from this attitude; it did not seem as though his mind were in the barricade. When each had gone to take up his position for the combat, there remained in the tap-room where Javert was bound to the post, only a single insurgent with a naked sword, watching over Javert, and himself, Mabeuf. At the moment of the attack, at the detonation, the physical shock had reached him and had, as it were, awakened him; he started up abruptly, crossed the room, and at the instant when Enjolras repeated his appeal: “Does no one volunteer?” the old man was seen to make his appearance on the threshold of the wine-shop. His presence produced a sort of commotion in the different groups. A shout went up:—

“It is the voter! It is the member of the Convention! It is the representative of the people!”

It is probable that he did not hear them.

He strode straight up to Enjolras, the insurgents withdrawing

before him with a religious fear ; he tore the flag from Enjolras, who recoiled in amazement, and then, since no one dared to stop or to assist him, this old man of eighty, with shaking head but firm foot, began slowly to ascend the staircase of paving-stones arranged in the barricade. This was so melancholy and so grand that all around him cried : " Off with your hats ! " At every step that he mounted, it was a frightful spectacle ; his white locks, his decrepit face, his lofty, bald, and wrinkled brow, his amazed and open mouth, his aged arm upholding the red banner, rose through the gloom and were enlarged in the bloody light of the torch, and the bystanders thought that they beheld the spectre of '93 emerging from the earth, with the flag of terror in his hand.

When he had reached the last step, when this trembling and terrible phantom, erect on that pile of rubbish in the presence of twelve hundred invisible guns, drew himself up in the face of death and as though he were more powerful than it, the whole barricade assumed amid the darkness, a supernatural and colossal form.

There ensued one of those silences which occur only in the presence of prodigies. In the midst of this silence, the old man waved the red flag and shouted : —

" Long live the Revolution ! Long live the Republic ! Fraternity ! Equality ! and Death ! "

Those in the barricade heard a low and rapid whisper, like the murmur of a priest who is despatching a prayer in haste. It was probably the commissary of police who was making the legal summons at the other end of the street.

Then the same piercing voice which had shouted : " Who goes there ? " shouted : —

" Retire ! "

M. Mabeuf, pale, haggard, his eyes lighted up with the mournful flame of aberration, raised the flag above his head and repeated : —

" Long live the Republic ! "

" Fire ! " said the voice.

A second discharge, similar to the first, rained down upon the barricade.

The old man fell on his knees, then rose again, dropped the flag and fell backwards on the pavement, like a log, at full length, with outstretched arms.

Rivulets of blood flowed beneath him. His aged head, pale and sad, seemed to be gazing at the sky.

One of those emotions which are superior to man, which

make him forget even to defend himself, seized upon the insurgents, and they approached the body with respectful awe.

"What men these regicides were!" said Enjolras.

Courfeyrac bent down to Enjolras' ear:—

"This is for yourself alone, I do not wish to dampen the enthusiasm. But this man was anything rather than a regicide. I knew him. His name was Father Mabeuf. I do not know what was the matter with him to-day. But he was a brave blockhead. Just look at his head."

"The head of a blockhead and the heart of a Brutus," replied Enjolras.

Then he raised his voice:—

"Citizens! This is the example which the old give to the young. We hesitated, he came! We were drawing back, he advanced! This is what those who are trembling with age teach to those who tremble with fear! This aged man is august in the eyes of his country. He has had a long life and a magnificent death! Now, let us place the body under cover, that each one of us may defend this old man dead as he would his father living, and may his presence in our midst render the barricade impregnable!"

A murmur of gloomy and energetic assent followed these words.

Enjolras bent down, raised the old man's head, and fierce as he was, he kissed him on the brow, then, throwing wide his arms, and handling this dead man with tender precaution, as though he feared to hurt it, he removed his coat, showed the bloody holes in it to all, and said:—

"This is our flag now."

III. — GAVROCHE WOULD HAVE DONE BETTER TO ACCEPT ENJOLRAS' CARBINE.

THEY threw a long black shawl of Widow Hucheloup's over Father Mabeuf. Six men made a litter of their guns; on this they laid the body, and bore it, with bared heads, with solemn slowness, to the large table in the tap-room.

These men, wholly absorbed in the grave and sacred task in which they were engaged, thought no more of the perilous situation in which they stood.

When the corpse passed near Javert, who was still impassive, Enjolras said to the spy:—

"It will be your turn presently!"

During all this time, Little Gavroche, who alone had not

quitted his post, but had remained on guard, thought he espied some men stealthily approaching the barricade. All at once he shouted :—

“ Look out ! ”

Courfeyrac, Enjolras, Jean Prouvaire, Combeferre, Joly, Bahorel, Bossuet, and all the rest ran tumultuously from the wine-shop. It was almost too late. They saw a glistening density of bayonets undulating above the barricade. Municipal guards of lofty stature were making their way in, some striding over the omnibus, others through the cut, thrusting before them the urchin, who retreated, but did not flee.

The moment was critical. It was that first, redoubtable moment of inundation, when the stream rises to the level of the levee and when the water begins to filter through the fissures of dike. A second more and the barricade would have been taken.

Bahorel dashed upon the first municipal guard who was entering, and killed him on the spot with a blow from his gun ; the second killed Bahorel with a blow from his bayonet. Another had already overthrown Courfeyrac, who was shouting : “ Follow me ! ” The largest of all, a sort of colossus, marched on Gavroche with his bayonet fixed. The urchin took in his arms Javert’s immense gun, levelled it resolutely at the giant, and fired. No discharge followed. Javert’s gun was not loaded. The municipal guard burst into a laugh and raised his bayonet at the child.

Before the bayonet had touched Gavroche, the gun slipped from the soldier’s grasp, a bullet had struck the municipal guardsman in the centre of the forehead, and he fell over on his back. A second bullet struck the other guard, who had assaulted Courfeyrac in the breast, and laid him low on the pavement.

This was the work of Marius, who had just entered the barricade.

IV. — THE BARREL OF POWDER.

MARIUS, still concealed in the turn of the Rue Mondétour, had witnessed, shuddering and irresolute, the first phase of the combat. But he had not long been able to resist that mysterious and sovereign vertigo which may be designated as the call of the abyss. In the presence of the imminence of the peril, in the presence of the death of M. Mabeuf, that melancholy enigma, in the presence of Bahorel killed, and Courfeyrac shouting : “ Follow me ! ” of that child threatened, of his friends to succor

or to avenge, all hesitation had vanished, and he had flung himself into the conflict, his two pistols in hand. With his first shot he had saved Gavroche, and with the second delivered Courfeyrac.

Amid the sound of the shots, amid the cries of the assaulted guards, the assailants had climbed the entrenchment, on whose summit Municipal Guards, soldiers of the line and National Guards from the suburbs could now be seen, gun in hand, rearing themselves to more than half the height of their bodies.

They already covered more than two-thirds of the barrier, but they did not leap into the enclosure, as though wavering in the fear of some trap. They gazed into the dark barricade as one would gaze into a lion's den. The light of the torch illuminated only their bayonets, their bear-skin caps, and the upper part of their uneasy and angry faces.

Marius had no longer any weapons; he had flung away his discharged pistols after firing them; but he had caught sight of the barrel of powder in the tap-room, near the door.

As he turned half round, gazing in that direction, a soldier took aim at him. At the moment when the soldier was sighting Marius, a hand was laid on the muzzle of the gun and obstructed it. This was done by some one who had darted forward, — the young workman in velvet trousers. The shot sped, traversed the hand and possibly, also, the workman, since he fell, but the ball did not strike Marius. All this, which was rather to be apprehended than seen through the smoke, Marius, who was entering the tap-room, hardly noticed. Still, he had, in a confused way, perceived that gun-barrel aimed at him, and the hand which had blocked it, and he had heard the discharge. But in moments like this, the things which one sees vacillate and are precipitated, and one pauses for nothing. One feels obscurely impelled towards more darkness still, and all is cloud.

The insurgents, surprised but not terrified, had rallied. Enjolras had shouted: "Wait! Don't fire at random!" In the first confusion, they might, in fact, wound each other. The majority of them had ascended to the window on the first story and to the attic windows, whence they commanded the assailants.

The most determined, with Enjolras, Courfeyrac, Jean Prouvaire, and Combeferre, had proudly placed themselves with their backs against the houses at the rear, unsheltered and facing the ranks of soldiers and guards who crowned the barricade.

All this was accomplished without haste, with that strange and threatening gravity which precedes engagements. They

took aim, point blank, on both sides : they were so close that they could talk together without raising their voices.

When they had reached this point where the spark is on the brink of darting forth, an officer in a gorget extended his sword and said : —

“ Lay down your arms ! ”

“ Fire ! ” replied Enjolras.

The two discharges took place at the same moment, and all disappeared in smoke.

An acrid and stifling smoke in which dying and wounded lay with weak, dull groans. When the smoke cleared away, the combatants on both sides could be seen to be thinned out, but still in the same positions, reloading in silence. All at once, a thundering voice was heard, shouting : —

“ Be off with you, or I’ll blow up the barricade ! ”

All turned in the direction whence the voice proceeded.

Marius had entered the tap-room, and had seized the barrel of powder, then he had taken advantage of the smoke, and the sort of obscure mist which filled the entrenched enclosure, to glide along the barricade as far as that cage of paving-stones where the torch was fixed. To tear from it the torch, to replace it by the barrel of powder, to thrust the pile of stones under the barrel, which was instantly staved in, with a sort of horrible obedience, — all this had cost Marius but the time necessary to stoop and rise again ; and now all, National Guards, Municipal Guards, officers, soldiers, huddled at the other extremity of the barricade, gazed stupidly at him, as he stood with his foot on the stones, his torch in his hand, his haughty face illuminated by a fatal resolution, drooping the flame of the torch towards that redoubtable pile where they could make out the broken barrel of powder, and giving vent to that startling cry : —

“ Be off with you, or I’ll blow up the barricade ! ”

Marius on that barricade after the octogenarian was the vision of the young revolution after the apparition of the old.

“ Blow up the barricade ! ” said a sergeant, “ and yourself with it ! ”

Marius retorted : “ And myself also.”

And he dropped the torch towards the barrel of powder.

But there was no longer any one on the barrier. The assailants, abandoning their dead and wounded, flowed back pell-mell and in disorder towards the extremity of the street, and there were again lost in the night. It was a headlong flight.

The barricade was free.

V. — END OF THE VERSES OF JEAN. PROUVAIRE.

ALL flocked around Marius. Courfeyrac flung himself on his neck.

“Here you are!”

“What luck!” said Combeferre.

“You came in opportunely!” ejaculated Bossuet.

“If it had not been for you, I should have been dead!” began Courfeyrac again.

“If it had not been for you, I should have been gobbled up!” added Gavroche.

Marius asked:—

“Where is the chief?”

“You are he!” said Enjolras.

Marius had had a furnace in his brain all day long; now it was a whirlwind. This whirlwind which was within him, produced on him the effect of being outside of him and of bearing him away. It seemed to him that he was already at an immense distance from life. His two luminous months of joy and love, ending abruptly at that frightful precipice, Cosette lost to him, that barricade, M. Mabeuf getting himself killed for the Republic, himself the leader of the insurgents, — all these things appeared to him like a tremendous nightmare. He was obliged to make a mental effort to recall the fact that all that surrounded him was real. Marius had already seen too much of life not to know that nothing is more imminent than the impossible, and that what it is always necessary to foresee is the unforeseen. He had looked on at his own drama as a piece which one does not understand.

In the mists which enveloped his thoughts, he did not recognize Javert, who, bound to his post, had not so much as moved his head during the whole of the attack on the barricade, and who had gazed on the revolt seething around him with the resignation of a martyr and the majesty of a judge. Marius had not even seen him.

In the meanwhile, the assailants did not stir, they could be heard marching and swarming through at the end of the street, but they did not venture into it, either because they were awaiting orders or because they were awaiting reinforcements before hurling themselves afresh on this impregnable redoubt. The insurgents had posted sentinels, and some of them, who were medical students, set about caring for the wounded.

They had thrown the tables out of the wine-shop, with the

exception of the two tables reserved for lint and cartridges, and of the one on which lay Father Mabeuf; they had added them to the barricade, and had replaced them in the tap-room with mattresses from the bed of the widow Hucheloup and her servants. On these mattresses they had laid the wounded. As for the three poor creatures who inhabited Corinthe, no one knew what had become of them. They were finally found, however, hidden in the cellar.

A poignant emotion clouded the joy of the disencumbered barricade.

The roll was called. One of the insurgents were missing. And who was it? One of the dearest. One of the most valiant. Jean Prouvaire. He was sought among the wounded, he was not there. He was sought among the dead, he was not there. He was evidently a prisoner. Combeferre said to Enjolras:—

“They have our friend; we have their agent. Are you set on the death of that spy?”

“Yes,” replied Enjolras; “but less so than on the life of Jean Prouvaire.”

This took place in the tap-room near Javert’s post.

“Well,” resumed Combeferre, “I am going to fasten my handkerchief to my cane, and go as a flag of truce, to offer to exchange our man for theirs.”

“Listen,” said Enjolras, laying his hand on Combeferre’s arm.

At the end of the street there was a significant clash of arms.

They heard a manly voice shout:—

“Vive la France! Long live France! Long live the future!”

They recognized the voice of Prouvaire.

A flash passed, a report rang out.

Silence fell again.

“They have killed him,” exclaimed Combeferre.

Enjolras glanced at Javert, and said to him:—

“Your friends have just shot you.”

VI.—THE AGONY OF DEATH AFTER THE AGONY OF LIFE.

A PECULIARITY of this species of war is, that the attack of the barricades is almost always made from the front, and that the assailants generally abstain from turning the position, either because they fear ambushes, or because they are afraid of

getting entangled in the tortuous streets. The insurgents' whole attention had been directed, therefore, to the grand barricade, which was, evidently, the spot always menaced, and there the struggle would infallibly recommence. But Marius thought of the little barricade, and went thither. It was deserted and guarded only by the fire-pot which trembled between the paving-stones. Moreover, the Mondétour alley, and the branches of the Rue de la Petite Truanderie and the Rue du Cygne were profoundly calm.

As Marius was withdrawing, after concluding his inspection, he heard his name pronounced feebly in the darkness.

"Monsieur Marius!"

He started, for he recognized the voice which had called to him two hours before through the gate in the Rue Plumet.

Only, the voice now seemed to be nothing more than a breath.

He looked about him, but saw no one.

Marius thought he had been mistaken, that it was an illusion added by his mind to the extraordinary realities which were clashing around him. He advanced a step, in order to quit the distant recess where the barricade lay.

"Monsieur Marius!" repeated the voice.

This time he could not doubt that he had heard it distinctly; he looked and saw nothing.

"At your feet," said the voice.

He bent down, and saw in the darkness a form which was dragging itself towards him.

It was crawling along the pavement. It was this that had spoken to him.

The fire-pot allowed him to distinguish a blouse, torn trousers of coarse velvet, bare feet, and something which resembled a pool of blood. Marius indistinctly made out a pale head which was lifted towards him and which was saying to him:—

"You do not recognize me?"

"No."

"Éponine."

Marius bent hastily down. It was, in fact, that unhappy child. She was dressed in men's clothes.

"How come you here? What are you doing here?"

"I am dying," said she.

There are words and incidents which arouse dejected beings. Marius cried out with a start:—

"You are wounded! Wait, I will carry you into the room! They will attend to you there. Is it serious? How must I

take hold of you in order not to hurt you? Where do you suffer? Help! My God! But why did you come hither?"

And he tried to pass his arm under her, in order to raise her. She uttered a feeble cry.

"Have I hurt you?" asked Marius.

"A little."

"But I only touched your hand."

She raised her hand to Marius, and in the middle of that hand Marius saw a black hole.

"What is the matter with your hand?" said he.

"It is pierced."

"Pierced?"

"Yes."

"What with?"

"A bullet."

"How?"

"Did you see a gun aimed at you?"

"Yes, and a hand stopping it."

"It was mine."

Marius was seized with a shudder.

"What madness! Poor child! But so much the better, if that is all, it is nothing, let me carry you to a bed. They will dress your wound; one does not die of a pierced hand."

She murmured:—

"The bullet traversed my hand, but it came out through my back. It is useless to remove me from this spot. I will tell you how you can care for me better than any surgeon. Sit down near me on this stone."

He obeyed; she laid her head on Marius' knees, and, without looking at him, she said:—

"Oh! How good this is! How comfortable this is! There; I no longer suffer."

She remained silent for a moment, then she turned her face with an effort, and looked at Marius.

"Do you know what, Monsieur Marius? It puzzled me because you entered that garden; it was stupid, because it was I who showed you that house; and then, I ought to have said to myself that a young man like you —"

She paused, and overstepping the sombre transitions that undoubtedly existed in her mind, she resumed with a heart-rending smile:—

"You thought me ugly, didn't you?"

She continued:—

"You see, you are lost! Now, no one can get out of the

barricade. It was I who led you here, by the way! You are going to die, I count upon that. And yet, when I saw them taking aim at you, I put my hand on the muzzle of the gun. How queer it is! But it was because I wanted to die before you. When I received that bullet, I dragged myself here, no one saw me, no one picked me up, I was waiting for you, I said: 'So he is not coming!' Oh, if you only knew. I bit my blouse, I suffered so! Now I am well. Do you remember the day I entered your chamber and when I looked at myself in your mirror, and the day when I came to you on the boulevard near the washerwomen? How the birds sang! That was a long time ago. You gave me a hundred sous, and I said to you: 'I don't want your money.' I hope you picked up your coin? You are not rich. I did not think to tell you to pick it up. The sun was shining bright, and it was not cold. Do you remember, Monsieur Marius? Oh! How happy I am! Every one is going to die."

She had a mad, grave, and heart-breaking air. Her torn blouse disclosed her bare throat.

As she talked, she pressed her pierced hand to her breast, where there was another hole, and whence there spurted from moment to moment a stream of blood, like a jet of wine from an open bung-hole.

Marius gazed at this unfortunate creature with profound compassion.

"Oh!" she resumed, "it is coming again, I am stifling!"

She caught up her blouse and bit it, and her limbs stiffened on the pavement.

At that moment the young cock's crow executed by little Gavroche resounded through the barricade.

The child had mounted a table to load his gun, and was singing gayly the song then so popular:—

"En voyant Lafayette,
Le gendarme répète:—
Sauvons nous! sauvons nous!
sauvons nous!"

"On beholding Lafayette,
The gendarme repeats:—
Let us flee! let us flee!
let us flee!"

Éponine raised herself and listened; then she murmured:—
"It is he."

And turning to Marius:—

"My brother is here. He must not see me. He would scold me."

"Your brother?" inquired Marius, who was meditating in the most bitter and sorrowful depths of his heart on the duties to

the Thénardiens which his father had bequeathed to him; "who is your brother?"

"That little fellow."

"The one who is singing?"

"Yes."

Marius made a movement.

"Oh! don't go away," said she, "it will not be long now."

She was sitting almost upright, but her voice was very low and broken by hiccoughs.

At intervals, the death rattle interrupted her. She put her face as near that of Marius as possible. She added with a strange expression:—

"Listen, I do not wish to play you a trick. I have a letter in my pocket for you. I was told to put it in the post. I kept it. I did not want to have it reach you. But perhaps you will be angry with me for it when we meet again presently? Take your letter."

She grasped Marius' hand convulsively with her pierced hand, but she no longer seemed to feel her sufferings. She put Marius' hand in the pocket of her blouse. There, in fact, Marius felt a paper.

"Take it," said she.

Marius took the letter.

She made a sign of satisfaction and contentment.

"Now, for my trouble, promise me—"

And she stopped.

"What?" asked Marius.

"Promise me!"

"I promise."

"Promise to give me a kiss on my brow when I am dead.—I shall feel it."

She dropped her head again on Marius' knees, and her eyelids closed. He thought the poor soul had departed. Éponine remained motionless. All at once, at the very moment when Marius fancied her asleep forever, she slowly opened her eyes in which appeared the sombre profundity of death, and said to him in a tone whose sweetness seemed already to proceed from another world:—

"And by the way, Monsieur Marius, I believe that I was a little bit in love with you."

She tried to smile once more and expired.

VII.—GAVROCHE AS A PROFOUND CALCULATOR OF DISTANCES

MARIUS kept his promise. He dropped a kiss on that livid brow, where the icy perspiration stood in beads.

This was no infidelity to Cosette; it was a gentle and pensive farewell to an unhappy soul.

It was not without a tremor that he had taken the letter which Éponine had given him. He had immediately felt that it was an event of weight. He was impatient to read it. The heart of man is so constituted that the unhappy child had hardly closed her eyes when Marius began to think of unfolding this paper.

He laid her gently on the ground, and went away. Something told him that he could not peruse that letter in the presence of that body.

He drew near to a candle in the tap-room. It was a small note, folded and sealed with a woman's elegant care. The address was in a woman's hand and ran:—

"To Monsieur, Monsieur Marius Pontmercy, at M. Courfeyrac's, Rue de la Verrerie, No. 16."

He broke the seal and read:—

"My dearest, alas! my father insists on our setting out immediately. We shall be this evening in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7. In a week we shall be in England. COSETTE. June 4th."

Such was the innocence of their love that Marius was not even acquainted with Cosette's handwriting.

What had taken place may be related in a few words. Éponine had been the cause of everything. After the evening of the 3d of June she had cherished a double idea, to defeat the projects of her father and the ruffians on the house of the Rue Plumet, and to separate Marius and Cosette. She had exchanged rags with the first young scamp she came across who had thought it amusing to dress like a woman, while Éponine disguised herself like a man. It was she who had conveyed to Jean Valjean in the Champ de Mars the expressive warning: "Leave your house." Jean Valjean had, in fact, returned home, and had said to Cosette: "We set out this evening and we go to the Rue de l'Homme Armé with Toussaint. Next week, we shall be in London." Cosette, utterly overwhelmed by this unexpected blow, had hastily penned a couple of lines to Marius. But how was she to get the letter to the post? She never went out alone, and Toussaint, surprised at such a commis-

sion, would certainly show the letter to M. Fauchelevent. In this dilemma, Cosette had caught sight through the fence, of Éponine in man's clothes, who now prowled incessantly around the garden. Cosette had called to "this young workman" and had handed him five francs and the letter, saying: "Carry this letter immediately to its address." Éponine had put the letter in her pocket. The next day, on the 5th of June, she went to Courfeyrac's quarters to inquire for Marius, not for the purpose of delivering the letter, but, — a thing which every jealous and loving soul will comprehend, — "to see." There she had waited for Marius, or at least for Courfeyrac, still for the purpose of *seeing*. When Courfeyrac had told her: "We are going to the barricades," an idea flashed through her mind, to fling herself into that death, as she would have done into any other, and to thrust Marius into it also. She had followed Courfeyrac, had made sure of the locality where the barricade was in process of construction; and, quite certain, since Marius had received no warning, and since she had intercepted the letter, that he would go at dusk to his trysting-place for every evening, she had betaken herself to the Rue Plumet, had there awaited Marius, and had sent him, in the name of his friends, the appeal which would, she thought, lead him to the barricade. She reckoned on Marius' despair when he should fail to find Cosette; she was not mistaken. She had returned to the Rue de la Chanvrerie herself. What she did there the reader has just seen. She died with the tragic joy of jealous hearts who drag the beloved being into their own death, and who say: "No one shall have him!"

Marius covered Cosette's letter with kisses. So she loved him! For one moment the idea occurred to him that he ought not to die now. Then he said to himself: "She is going away. Her father is taking her to England, and my grandfather refuses his consent to the marriage. Nothing is changed in our fates." Dreamers like Marius are subject to supreme attacks of dejection, and desperate resolves are the result. The fatigue of living is insupportable; death is sooner over with. Then he reflected that he had still two duties to fulfil: to inform Cosette of his death and send her a final farewell, and to save from the impending catastrophe which was in preparation, that poor child, Éponine's brother and Thénardier's son.

He had a pocket-book about him; the same one which had contained the note-book in which he had inscribed so many thoughts of love for Cosette. He tore out a leaf and wrote on it a few lines in pencil: —

"Our marriage was impossible. I asked my grandfather, he refused; I have no fortune, neither hast thou. I hastened to thee, thou wert no longer there. Thou knowest the promise that I gave thee, I shall keep it. I die. I love thee. When thou readest this, my soul will be near thee, and thou wilt smile."

Having nothing wherewith to seal this letter, he contented himself with folding the paper in four, and added the address:—

"To Mademoiselle Cosette Fauchelevent, at M. Fauchelevent's, Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7."

Having folded the letter, he stood in thought for a moment, drew out his pocket-book again, opened it, and wrote, with the same pencil, these four lines on the first page:—

"My name is Marius Pontmercy. Carry my body to my grandfather, M. Gillenormand, Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire, No. 6, in the Marais."

He put his pocket-book back in his pocket, then he called Gavroche.

The gamin, at the sound of Marius' voice, ran up to him with his merry and devoted air.

"Will you do something for me?"

"Anything," said Gavroche. "Good God! if it had not been for you, I should have been done for."

"Do you see this letter?"

"Yes."

"Take it. Leave the barricade instantly" (Gavroche began to scratch his ear uneasily) "and to-morrow morning, you will deliver it at its address to Mademoiselle Cosette, at M. Fauchelevent's, Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7."

The heroic child replied:—

"Well, but! in the meanwhile the barricade will be taken, and I shall not be there."

"The barricade will not be attacked until daybreak, according to all appearances, and will not be taken before to-morrow noon."

The fresh respite which the assailants were granting to the barricade had, in fact, been prolonged. It was one of those intermissions which frequently occur in nocturnal combats, which are always followed by an increase of rage.

"Well," said Gavroche, "what if I were to go and carry your letter to-morrow?"

"It will be too late. The barricade will probably be blockaded, all the streets will be guarded, and you will not be able to get out. Go at once."

Gavroche could think of no reply to this, and stood there in indecision, scratching his ear sadly.

All at once, he took the letter with one of those birdlike movements which were common with him.

"All right," said he.

And he started off at a run through Mondétour lane.

An idea had occurred to Gavroche which had brought him to a decision, but he had not mentioned it for fear that Marius might offer some objection to it.

This was the idea:—

"It is barely midnight, the Rue de l'Homme Armé is not far off; I will go and deliver the letter at once, and I shall get back in time."



BOOK FIFTEENTH.—THE RUE DE L'HOMME ARMÉ.

I.—A DRINKER IS A BABBLER.

WHAT are the convulsions of a city in comparison with the insurrections of the soul? Man is a depth still greater than the people. Jean Valjean at that very moment was the prey of a terrible upheaval. Every sort of gulf had opened again within him. He also was trembling, like Paris, on the brink of an obscure and formidable revolution. A few hours had sufficed to bring this about. His destiny and his conscience had suddenly been covered with gloom. Of him also, as well as of Paris, it might have been said "The two principles are face to face. The white angel and the black angel are about to seize each other on the bridge of the abyss. Which of the two will hurl the other over? Who will carry the day?"

On the evening preceding this same 5th of June, Jean Valjean, accompanied by Cosette and Toussaint had installed himself in the Rue de l'Homme Armé. A change awaited him there.

Cosette had not quitted the Rue Plumet without making an effort at resistance. For the first time since they had lived side by side, Cosette's will and the will of Jean Valjean had proved to be distinct, and had been in opposition, at least, if they had not clashed. There had been objections on one side and inflexibility on the other. The abrupt advice: "Leave

your house," hurled at Jean Valjean by a stranger, had alarmed him to the extent of rendering him peremptory. He thought that he had been traced and followed. Cosette had been obliged to give way.

Both had arrived in the Rue de l'Homme Armé without opening their lips, and without uttering a word, each being absorbed in his own personal preoccupation; Jean Valjean so uneasy that he did not notice Cosette's sadness, Cosette so sad that she did not notice Jean Valjean's uneasiness.

Jean Valjean had taken Toussaint with him, a thing which he had never done in his previous absences. He perceived the possibility of not returning to the Rue Plumet, and he could neither leave Toussaint behind nor confide his secret to her. Besides, he felt that she was devoted and trustworthy. Treachery between master and servant begins in curiosity. Now Toussaint, as though she had been destined to be Jean Valjean's servant, was not curious. She stammered in her peasant dialect of Barneville: "I am made so; I do my work; the rest is no affair of mine."

In this departure from the Rue Plumet, which had been almost a flight, Jean Valjean had carried away nothing but the little embalmed valise, baptized by Cosette "the inseparable." Full trunks would have required porters, and porters are witnesses. A fiacre had been summoned to the door on the Rue de Babylone, and they had taken their departure.

It was with difficulty that Toussaint had obtained permission to pack up a little linen and clothes and a few toilet articles. Cosette had taken only her portfolio and her blotting-book.

Jean Valjean, with a view to augmenting the solitude and the mystery of this departure, had arranged to quit the pavilion of the Rue Plumet only at dusk, which had allowed Cosette time to write her note to Marius. They had arrived in the Rue de l'Homme Armé after night had fully fallen.

They had gone to bed in silence.

The lodgings in the Rue de l'Homme Armé were situated on a back court, on the second floor, and were composed of two sleeping-rooms, a dining-room and a kitchen adjoining the dining-room, with a garret where there was a folding-bed, and which fell to Toussaint's share. The dining-room was an ante-chamber as well, and separated the two bedrooms. The apartment was provided with all necessary utensils.

People re-acquire confidence as foolishly as they lose it; human nature is so constituted. Hardly had Jean Valjean reached the Rue de l'Homme Armé when his anxiety was lightened and

by degrees dissipated. There are soothing spots which act in some sort mechanically on the mind. An obscure street, peaceable inhabitants. Jean Valjean experienced an indescribable contagion of tranquillity in that alley of ancient Paris, which is so narrow that it is barred against carriages by a transverse beam placed on two posts, which is deaf and dumb in the midst of the clamorous city, dimly lighted at mid-day, and is, so to speak, incapable of emotions between two rows of lofty houses centuries old, which hold their peace like ancients as they are. There was a touch of stagnant oblivion in that street. Jean Valjean drew his breath once more there. How could he be found there?

His first care was to place *the inseparable* beside him.

He slept well. Night brings wisdom; we may add, night soothes. On the following morning he awoke in a mood that was almost gay. He thought the dining-room charming, though it was hideous, furnished with an old round table, a long side-board surmounted by a slanting mirror, a dilapidated arm-chair, and several plain chairs which were encumbered with Toussaint's packages. In one of these packages Jean Valjean's uniform of a National Guard was visible through a rent.

As for Cosette, she had had Toussaint take some broth to her room, and did not make her appearance until evening.

About five o'clock, Toussaint, who was going and coming and busying herself with the tiny establishment, set on the table a cold chicken, which Cosette, out of deference to her father, consented to glance at.

That done, Cosette, under the pretext of an obstinate sick headache, had bade Jean Valjean good night and had shut herself up in her chamber. Jean Valjean had eaten a wing of the chicken with a good appetite, and with his elbows on the table, having gradually recovered his serenity, had regained possession of his sense of security.

While he was discussing this modest dinner, he had, twice or thrice, noticed in a confused way, Toussaint's stammering words as she said to him: "Monsieur, there is something going on, they are fighting in Paris." But absorbed in a throng of inward calculations, he had paid no heed to it. To tell the truth, he had not heard her. He rose and began to pace from the door to the window and from the window to the door, growing ever more serene.

With this calm, Cosette, his sole anxiety, recurred to his thoughts. Not that he was troubled by this headache, a little nervous crisis, a young girl's fit of sulks, the cloud of a moment, there would be nothing left of it in a day or two; but he

meditated on the future, and, as was his habit, he thought of it with pleasure. After all, he saw no obstacle to their happy life resuming its course. At certain hours, everything seems impossible, at others everything appears easy; Jean Valjean was in the midst of one of these good hours. They generally succeed the bad ones, as day follows night, by virtue of that law of succession and of contrast which lies at the very foundation of nature, and which superficial minds call antithesis. In this peaceful street where he had taken refuge, Jean Valjean got rid of all that had been troubling him for some time past. This very fact, that he had seen many shadows, made him begin to perceive a little azure. To have quitted the Rue Plumet without complications or incidents was one good step already accomplished. Perhaps it would be wise to go abroad, if only for a few months, and to set out for London. Well, they would go. What difference did it make to him whether he was in France or in England, provided he had Cosette beside him? Cosette was his nation. Cosette sufficed for his happiness; the idea that he, perhaps, did not suffice for Cosette's happiness, that idea which had formerly been the cause of his fever and sleeplessness, did not even present itself to his mind. He was in a state of collapse from all his past sufferings, and he was fully entered on optimism. Cosette was by his side, she seemed to be his; an optical illusion which every one has experienced. He arranged in his own mind, with all sorts of felicitous devices, his departure for England with Cosette, and he beheld his felicity reconstituted wherever he pleased, in the perspective of his reverie.

As he paced to and fro with long strides, his glance suddenly encountered something strange.

In the inclined mirror facing him which surmounted the sideboard, he saw the four lines which follow:—

“My dearest, alas! my father insists on our setting out immediately. We shall be this evening in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7. In a week we shall be in England. COSETTE. June 4th.”

Jean Valjean halted, perfectly haggard.

Cosette on her arrival had placed her blotting-book on the sideboard in front of the mirror, and, utterly absorbed in her agony of grief, had forgotten it and left it there, without even observing that she had left it wide open, and open at precisely the page on which she had laid to dry the four lines which she had penned, and which she had given in charge of the young workman in the Rue Plumet. The writing had been printed off on the blotter.

The mirror reflected the writing.

The result was, what is called in geometry, *the symmetrical image*; so that the writing, reversed on the blotter, was righted in the mirror and presented its natural appearance; and Jean Valjean had beneath his eyes the letter written by Cosette to Marius on the preceding evening.

It was simple and withering.

Jean Valjean stepped up to the mirror. He read the four lines again, but he did not believe them. They produced on him the effect of appearing in a flash of lightning. It was a hallucination, it was impossible. It was not so.

Little by little, his perceptions became more precise, he looked at Cosette's blotting-book, and the consciousness of the reality returned to him. He caught up the blotter and said: "It comes from there." He feverishly examined the four lines imprinted on the blotter, the reversal of the letters converted into an odd scrawl, and he saw no sense in it. Then he said to himself: "But this signifies nothing; there is nothing written here." And he drew a long breath with inexpressible relief. Who has not experienced those foolish joys in horrible instants? The soul does not surrender to despair until it has exhausted all illusions.

He held the blotter in his hand and contemplated it in stupid delight, almost ready to laugh at the hallucination of which he had been the dupe. All at once his eyes fell upon the mirror again, and again he beheld the vision. There were the four lines outlined with inexorable clearness. This time it was no mirage. The recurrence of a vision is a reality; it was palpable, it was the writing restored in the mirror. He understood.

Jean Valjean tottered, dropped the blotter, and fell into the old arm-chair beside the buffet, with drooping head, and glassy eyes, in utter bewilderment. He told himself that it was plain, that the light of the world had been eclipsed forever, and that Cosette had written that to some one. Then he heard his soul, which had become terrible once more, give vent to a dull roar in the gloom. Try then the effect of taking from the lion the dog which he has in his cage!

Strange and sad to say, at that very moment, Marius had not yet received Cosette's letter; chance had treacherously carried it to Jean Valjean before delivering it to Marius. Up to that day, Jean Valjean had not been vanquished by trial. He had been subjected to fearful proofs; no violence of bad fortune had been spared him; the ferocity of fate, armed with all vindictiveness and all social scorn, had taken him for her prey and had raged against him. He had accepted every extremity when it had

been necessary ; he had sacrificed his inviolability as a reformed man, had yielded up his liberty, risked his head, lost everything, suffered everything, and he had remained disinterested and stoical to such a point that he might have been thought to be absent from himself like a martyr. His conscience inured to every assault of destiny, might have appeared to be forever impregnable. Well, any one who had beheld his spiritual self would have been obliged to concede that it weakened at that moment. It was because, of all the tortures which he had undergone in the course of this long inquisition to which destiny had doomed him, this was the most terrible. Never had such pincers seized him hitherto. He felt the mysterious stirring of all his latent sensibilities. He felt the plucking at the strange chord. Alas ! the supreme trial, let us say rather, the only trial, is the loss of the beloved being.

Poor old Jean Valjean certainly did not love Cosette otherwise than as a father ; but we have already remarked, above, that into this paternity the widowhood of his life had introduced all the shades of love ; he loved Cosette as his daughter, and he loved her as his mother, and he loved her as his sister ; and, as he had never had either a woman to love or a wife, as nature is a creditor who accepts no protest, that sentiment also, the most impossible to lose, was mingled with the rest, vague, ignorant, pure with the purity of blindness, unconscious, celestial, angelic, divine ; less like a sentiment than like an instinct, less like an instinct than like an imperceptible and invisible but real attraction ; and love, properly speaking, was, in his immense tenderness for Cosette, like the thread of gold in the mountain, concealed and virgin.

Let the reader recall the situation of heart which we have already indicated. No marriage was possible between them ; not even that of souls ; and yet, it is certain that their destinies were wedded. With the exception of Cosette, that is to say, with the exception of a childhood, Jean Valjean had never, in the whole of his long life, known anything of that which may be loved. The passions and loves which succeed each other had not produced in him those successive green growths, tender green or dark green, which can be seen in foliage which passes through the winter and in men who pass fifty. In short, and we have insisted on it more than once, all this interior fusion, all this whole, of which the sum total was a lofty virtue, ended in rendering Jean Valjean a father to Cosette. A strange father, forged from the grandfather, the son, the brother, and the husband, that existed in Jean Valjean ; a father in whom there

was included even a mother ; a father who loved Cosette and adored her, and who held that child as his light, his home, his family, his country, his paradise.

Thus when he saw that the end had absolutely come, that she was escaping from him, that she was slipping from his hands, that she was gliding from him, like a cloud, like water, when he had before his eyes this crushing proof : " another is the goal of her heart, another is the wish of her life ; there is a dearest one, I am no longer anything but her father, I no longer exist " ; when he could no longer doubt, when he said to himself : " She is going away from me ! " the grief which he felt surpassed the bounds of possibility. To have done all that he had done for the purpose of ending like this ! And the very idea of being nothing ! Then, as we have just said, a quiver of revolt ran through him from head to foot. He felt, even in the very roots of his hair, the immense re-awakening of egotism, and the *I* in this man's abyss howled.

There is such a thing as the sudden giving way of the inward subsoil. A despairing certainty does not make its way into a man without thrusting aside and breaking certain profound elements which, in some cases, are the very man himself. Grief, when it attains this shape, is a headlong flight of all the forces of the conscience. These are fatal crises. Few among us emerge from them still like ourselves and firm in duty. When the limit of endurance is overstepped, the most imperturbable virtue is disconcerted. Jean Valjean took the blotter again, and convinced himself afresh ; he remained bowed and as though petrified and with staring eyes, over those four unobjectionable lines ; and there arose within him such a cloud that one might have thought that everything in this soul was crumbling away.

He examined this revelation, athwart the exaggerations of revelry, with an apparent and terrifying calmness, for it is a fearful thing when a man's calmness reaches the coldness of the statue.

He measured the terrible step which his destiny had taken without his having a suspicion of the fact ; he recalled his fears of the preceding summer, so foolishly dissipated ; he recognized the precipice, it was still the same ; only, Jean Valjean was no longer on the brink, he was at the bottom of it.

The unprecedented and heart-rending thing about it was that he had fallen without perceiving it. All the light of his life had departed, while he still fancied that he beheld the sun.

His instinct did not hesitate. He put together certain circumstances, certain dates, certain blushes and certain pallors on Cosette's part, and he said to himself : " It is he."

The divination of despair is a sort of mysterious bow which never misses its aim. He struck Marius with his first conjecture. He did not know the name, but he found the man instantly. He distinctly perceived, in the background of the implacable conjuration of his memories, the unknown prowler of the Luxembourg, that wretched seeker of love adventures, that idler of romance, that idiot, that coward, for it is cowardly to come and make eyes at young girls who have beside them a father who loves them.

After he had thoroughly verified the fact that this young man was at the bottom of this situation, and that everything proceeded from that quarter, he, Jean Valjean, the regenerated man, the man who had so labored over his soul, the man who had made so many efforts to resolve all life, all misery, and all unhappiness into love, looked into his own breast and there beheld a spectre, Hate.

Great griefs contain something of dejection. They discourage one with existence. The man into whom they enter feels something within him withdraw from him. In his youth, their visits are lugubrious; later on they are sinister. Alas, if despair is a fearful thing when the blood is hot, when the hair is black, when the head is erect on the body like the flame on the torch, when the roll of destiny still retains its full thickness, when the heart, full of desirable love, still possesses beats which can be returned to it, when one has time for redress, when all women and all smiles and all the future and all the horizon are before one, when the force of life is complete, what is it in old age, when the years hasten on, growing ever paler, to that twilight hour when one begins to behold the stars of the tomb?

While he was meditating, Toussaint entered. Jean Valjean rose and asked her: —

“In what quarter is it? Do you know?”

Toussaint was struck dumb, and could only answer him: —

“What is it, sir?”

Jean Valjean began again: “Did you not tell me that just now that there is fighting going on?”

“Ah! yes, sir,” replied Toussaint. “It is in the direction of Saint-Merry.”

There is a mechanical movement which comes to us, unconsciously, from the most profound depths of our thought. It was, no doubt, under the impulse of a movement of this sort, and of which he was hardly conscious, that Jean Valjean, five minutes later, found himself in the street.

Bareheaded, he sat upon the stone post at the door of his house. He seemed to be listening.

Night had come.

II. — THE STREET URCHIN AN ENEMY OF LIGHT.

How long did he remain thus? What was the ebb and flow of this tragic meditation? Did he straighten up? Did he remain bowed? Had he been bent to breaking? Could he still rise and regain his footing in his conscience upon something solid? He probably would not have been able to tell himself.

The street was deserted. A few uneasy bourgeois, who were rapidly returning home, hardly saw him. Each one for himself in times of peril. The lamp-lighter came as usual to light the lantern which was situated precisely opposite the door of No. 7, and then went away. Jean Valjean would not have appeared like a living man to any one who had examined him in that shadow. He sat there on the post of his door, motionless as a form of ice. There is congelment in despair. The alarm bells and a vague and stormy uproar were audible. In the midst of all these convulsions of the bell mingled with the revolt, the clock of Saint-Paul struck eleven, gravely and without haste; for the tocsin is man; the hour is God. The passage of the hour produced no effect on Jean Valjean; Jean Valjean did not stir. Still, at about that moment, a brusque report burst forth in the direction of the Halles, a second yet more violent followed; it was probably that attack on the barricade in the Rue de la Chanvrière which we have just seen repulsed by Marius. At this double discharge, whose fury seemed augmented by the stupor of the night, Jean Valjean started; he rose, turning towards the quarter whence the noise proceeded; then he fell back upon the post again, folded his arms, and his head slowly sank on his bosom again.

He resumed his gloomy dialogue with himself.

All at once, he raised his eyes; some one was walking in the street, he heard steps near him. He looked, and by the light of the lanterns, in the direction of the street which ran into the Rue-aux-Archives, he perceived a young, livid, and beaming face.

Gavroche had just arrived in the Rue l'Homme Armé.

Gavroche was staring into the air, apparently in search of something. He saw Jean Valjean perfectly well, but he took no notice of him.

Gavroche after staring into the air, stared below; he raised himself on tiptoe, and felt of the doors and windows of the

ground-floor ; they were all shut, bolted, and padlocked. After having authenticated the fronts of five or six barricaded houses in this manner, the urchin shrugged his shoulders, and took himself to task in these terms :—

“ Pardi ! ”

Then he began to stare into the air again.

Jean Valjean, who, an instant previously, in his then state of mind, would not have spoken to or even answered any one, felt irresistibly impelled to accost that child.

“ What is the matter with you, my little fellow ? ” he said.

“ The matter with me is that I am hungry,” replied Gavroche frankly. And he added : “ Little fellow yourself.”

Jean Valjean fumbled in his fob and pulled out a five-franc piece.

But Gavroche, who was of the wagtail species, and who skipped vivaciously from one gesture to another, had just picked up a stone. He had caught sight of the lantern.

“ See here,” said he, “ you still have your lanterns here. You are disobeying the regulations, my friend. This is disorderly. Smash that for me.”

And he flung the stone at the lantern, whose broken glass fell with such a clatter that the bourgeois in hiding behind their curtains in the opposite house cried : “ There is ‘ Ninety-three ’ come again.”

The lantern oscillated violently, and went out. The street had suddenly become black.

“ That’s right, old street,” ejaculated Gavroche, “ put on your night-cap.”

And turning to Jean Valjean :—

“ What do you call that gigantic monument that you have there at the end of the street ? It’s the Archives, isn’t it ? I must crumble up those big stupids of pillars a bit and make a nice barricade out of them.”

Jean Valjean stepped up to Gavroche.

“ Poor creature,” he said in a low tone, and speaking to himself, “ he is hungry.”

And he laid the hundred-sou piece in his hand.

Gavroche raised his face, astonished at the size of this sou ; he stared at it in the darkness, and the whiteness of the big sou dazzled him. He knew five-franc pieces by hearsay ; their reputation was agreeable to him ; he was delighted to see one close to. He said :—

“ Let us contemplate the tiger.”

He gazed at it for several minutes in ecstasy ; then, turning to Jean Valjean, he held out the coin to him, and said majestically to him :—

"Bourgeois, I prefer to smash lanterns. Take back your ferocious beast. You can't bribe me. That has got five claws; but it doesn't scratch me."

"Have you a mother?" asked Jean Valjean.

Gavroche replied:—

"More than you have, perhaps."

"Well," returned Jean Valjean, "keep the money for your mother!"

Gavroche was touched. Moreover, he had just noticed that the man who was addressing him had no hat, and this inspired him with confidence.

"Truly," said he, "so it wasn't to keep me from breaking the lanterns?"

"Break whatever you please."

"You're a fine man," said Gavroche.

And he put the five-franc piece into one of his pockets.

His confidence having increased, he added:—

"Do you belong in this street?"

"Yes, why?"

"Can you tell me where No. 7 is?"

"What do you want with No. 7?"

Here the child paused, he feared that he had said too much; he thrust his nails energetically into his hair and contented himself with replying:—

"Ah! Here it is."

An idea flashed through Jean Valjean's mind. Anguish does have these gleams. He said to the lad:—

"Are you the person who is bringing a letter that I am expecting?"

"You?" said Gavroche. "You are not a woman."

"The letter is for Mademoiselle Cosette, is it not?"

"Cosette," muttered Gavroche. "Yes, I believe that is the queer name."

"Well," resumed Jean Valjean, "I am the person to whom you are to deliver the letter. Give it here."

"In that case, you must know that I was sent from the barricade."

"Of course," said Jean Valjean.

Gavroche engulfed his hand in another of his pockets and drew out a paper folded in four.

Then he made the military salute.

"Respect for despatches," said he. "It comes from the Provisional Government."

"Give it to me," said Jean Valjean.

Gavroche held the paper elevated above his head.

"Don't go and fancy it's a love letter. It is for a woman, but it's for the people. We men fight and we respect the fair sex. We are not as they are in fine society, where there are lions who send chickens¹ to camels."

"Give it to me."

"After all," continued Gavroche, "you have the air of an honest man."

"Give it to me quick."

"Catch hold of it."

And he handed the paper to Jean Valjean.

"And make haste, Monsieur What's-your-name, for Mamselle Cosette is waiting."

Gavroche was satisfied with himself for having produced this remark.

Jean Valjean began again:—

"Is it to Saint-Merry that the answer is to be sent?"

"There you are making some of those bits of pastry vulgarly called *brioches* [blunders]. This letter comes from the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and I'm going back there. Good evening, citizen."

That said, Gavroche took himself off, or, to describe it more exactly, fluttered away in the direction whence he had come with a flight like that of an escaped bird. He plunged back into the gloom as though he made a hole in it, with the rigid rapidity of a projectile; the alley of l'Homme Armé became silent and solitary once more; in a twinkling, that strange child, who had about him something of the shadow and of the dream, had buried himself in the mists of the rows of black houses, and was lost there, like smoke in the dark; and one might have thought that he had dissipated and vanished, had there not taken place, a few minutes after his disappearance, a startling shiver of glass, and had not the magnificent crash of a lantern rattling down on the pavement once more abruptly awakened the indignant bourgeois. It was Gavroche upon his way through the Rue du Chaume.

III. — WHILE COSETTE AND TOUSSAINT ARE ASLEEP.

JEAN VALJEAN went into the house with Marius' letter.

He groped his way up the stairs, as pleased with the darkness as an owl who grips his prey, opened and shut his door softly,

¹ Love letters.

listened to see whether he could hear any noise, — made sure that, to all appearances Cosette and Toussaint were asleep, and plunged three or four matches into the bottle of the Fumade lighter before he could evoke a spark, so greatly did his hand tremble. What he had just done smacked of theft. At last the candle was lighted ; he leaned his elbows on the table, unfolded the paper, and read.

In violent emotions, one does not read, one flings to the earth, so to speak, the paper which one holds, one clutches it like a victim, one crushes it, one digs into it the nails of one's wrath, or of one's joy ; one hastens to the end, one leaps to the beginning ; attention is at fever heat ; it takes up in the gross, as it were, the essential points ; it seizes on one point, and the rest disappears. In Marius' note to Cosette, Jean Valjean saw only these words.

" I die. When thou readest this, my soul will be near thee."

In the presence of these two lines, he was horribly dazzled ; he remained for a moment, crushed, as it were, by the change of emotion which was taking place within him, he stared at Marius' note with a sort of intoxicated amazement, he had before his eyes that splendor, the death of a hated individual.

He uttered a frightful cry of inward joy. So it was all over. The catastrophe had arrived sooner than he had dared to hope. The being who obstructed his destiny was disappearing. That man had taken himself off of his own accord, freely, willingly. This man was going to his death, and he, Jean Valjean, had had no hand in the matter, and it was through no fault of his. Perhaps, even, he is already dead. Here his fever entered into calculations. No, he is not dead yet. The letter had evidently been intended for Cosette to read on the following morning ; after the two discharges that were heard between eleven o'clock and midnight, nothing more has taken place ; the barricade will not be attacked seriously until daybreak ; but that makes no difference, from the moment when " that man " is concerned in this war, he is lost ; he is caught in the gearing. Jean Valjean felt himself delivered. So he was about to find himself alone with Cosette once more. The rivalry would cease ; the future was beginning again. He had but to keep this note in his pocket. Cosette would never know what had become of that man. All that there requires to be done is to let things take their own course. This man cannot escape. If he is not already dead, it is certain that he is about to die. What good fortune !

Having said all this to himself, he became gloomy.

Then he went down stairs and woke up the porter.

About an hour later, Jean Valjean went out in the complete costume of a National Guard, and with his arms. The porter had easily found in the neighborhood the wherewithal to complete his equipment. He had a loaded gun and a cartridge-box filled with cartridges.

He strode off in the direction of the markets.

IV. — GAVROCHE'S EXCESS OF ZEAL.

In the meantime, Gavroche had had an adventure.

Gavroche, after having conscientiously stoned the lantern in the Rue du Chaume, entered the Rue des Vieilles-Haudriettes, and not seeing "even a cat" there, he thought the opportunity a good one to strike up all the song of which he was capable. His march, far from being retarded by his singing, was accelerated by it. He began to sow along the sleeping or terrified houses these incendiary couplets :—

"L'oiseau médit dans les charmillas,
Et prétend qu'hier Atala
Avec un Russe s'en alla.
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

"Mon ami Pierrot, tu babilles,
Parce que l'autre jour Mila
Cogna sa vitre et m'appela,
Où vont les belles filles
Lon la.

"Les drôlesses sont fort gentilles,
Leur poison qui m'ensorcela
Griserait Monsieur Orfila.
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

"J'aime l'amour et les bisbilles,
J'aime Agnès, j'aime Paméla,
Lise en m'allumant se brûla.
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

"Jadis, quand je vis les mantilles
De Suzette et de Zéila,
Mon ame à leurs plis se mêla,
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

"Amour, quand dans l'ombre où tu brilles,
Tu coiffes de roses Lola,
Je me damnerais pour cela.
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

"Jeanne à ton miroir tu t'habilles!
Mon cœur un beau jour s'envola.
Je crois que c'est Jeanne qui l'a.
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

"Le soir, en sortant des quadrilles,
Je montre aux étoiles Stella,
Et je leur dis: 'Régardez-la.'
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la."¹

Gavroche, as he sang, was lavish of his pantomime. Gesture is the strong point of the refrain. His face, an inexhaustible repertory of masks, produced grimaces more convulsing and more fantastic than the rents of a cloth torn in a high gale. Unfortunately, as he was alone, and as it was night, this was neither seen nor even visible. Such wastes of riches do occur.

All at once, he stopped short.

"Let us interrupt the romance," said he.

His feline eye had just descried, in the recess of a carriage door what is called in painting, an *ensemble*, that is to say, a person and a thing; the thing was a hand-cart, the person was a man from Auvergene who was sleeping therein.

The shafts of the cart rested on the pavement, and the Auvergnat's head was supported against the front of the cart. His body was coiled up on this inclined plane and his feet touched the ground.

Gavroche, with his experience of the things of this world, rec-

¹ The bird slanders in the elms,
And pretends that yesterday, Atala
Went off with a Russian,
Where fair maids go.
Lon la.

My friend Pierrot, thou pratest, because Mila knocked at her pane the other day and called me. The jades are very charming, their poison which bewitched me would intoxicate Monsieur Orfila. I'm fond of love and its bickerings, I love Agnes, I love Pamela, Lise burned herself in setting me aflame. In former days when I saw the mantillas of Suzette and of Zeila, my soul mingled with their folds. Love, when thou gleamest in the dark thou crownest Lola with roses. I would lose my soul for that. Jeanne, at thy mirror thou deckest thyself! One fine day, my heart flew forth. I think that it is Jeanne who has it. At night, when I come from the quadrilles, I show Stella to the stars, and I say to them: "Behold her." Where fair maids go, lon la.

ognized a drunken man. He was some corner errand-man who had drunk too much and was sleeping too much.

"There now," thought Gavroche, "that's what the summer nights are good for. We'll take the cart for the Republic, and leave the Auvergnat for the Monarchy."

His mind had just been illuminated by this flash of light:—

"How bully that cart would look on our barricade!"

The Auvergnat was snoring.

Gavroche gently tugged at the cart from behind, and at the Auvergnat from the front, that is to say, by the feet, and at the expiration of another minute the imperturbable Auvergnat was reposing flat on the pavement.

The cart was free.

Gavroche, habituated to facing the unexpected in all quarters, had everything about him. He fumbled in one of his pockets, and pulled from it a scrap of paper and a bit of red pencil filched from some carpenter.

He wrote:—

"French Republic."

"Received thy cart."

And he signed it: "GAVROCHE."

That done, he put the paper in the pocket of the still snoring Auvergnat's velvet vest, seized the cart shafts in both hands, and set off in the direction of the Halles, pushing the cart before him at a hard gallop with a glorious and triumphant uproar.

This was perilous. There was a post at the Royal Printing Establishment. Gavroche did not think of this. This post was occupied by the National Guards of the suburbs. The squad began to wake up, and heads were raised from camp beds. Two street lanterns broken in succession, that ditty sung at the top of the lungs. This was a great deal for those cowardly streets, which desire to go to sleep at sunset, and which put the extinguisher on their candles at such an early hour. For the last hour, that boy had been creating an uproar in that peaceable arrondissement, the uproar of a fly in a bottle. The sergeant of the banlieue lent an ear. He waited. He was a prudent man.

The mad rattle of the cart, filled to overflowing the possible measure of waiting, and decided the sergeant to make a reconnaissance.

"There's a whole band of them there!" said he, "let us proceed gently."

It was clear that the hydra of anarchy had emerged from its box and that it was stalking abroad through the quarter.

And the sergeant ventured out of the post with cautious tread.

All at once, Gavroche, pushing his cart in front of him, and at the very moment when he was about to turn into the Rue des Vieilles-Haudriettes, found himself face to face with a uniform, a shako, a plume, and a gun.

For the second time, he stopped short.

"Hullo," said he, "it's him. Good day, public order."

Gavroche's amazement was always brief and speedily thawed.

"Where are you going, you rascal?" shouted the sergeant.

"Citizen," retorted Gavroche, "I haven't called you 'bourgeois' yet. Why do you insult me?"

"Where are you going, you rogue?"

"Monsieur," retorted Gavroche, "perhaps you were a man of wit yesterday, but you have degenerated this morning."

"I ask you where you are going, you villain?"

Gavroche replied:—

"You speak prettily. Really, no one would suppose you as old as you are. You ought to sell all your hair at a hundred francs apiece. That would yield you five hundred francs."

"Where are you going? Where are you going? Where are you going, bandit?"

Gavroche retorted again:—

"What villanous words! You must wipe your mouth better the first time that they give you suck."

The sergeant lowered his bayonet.

"Will you tell me where you are going, you wretch?"

"General," said Gavroche, "I'm on my way to look for a doctor for my wife who is in labor."

"To arms!" shouted the sergeant.

The master-stroke of strong men consists in saving themselves by the very means that have ruined them; Gavroche took in the whole situation at a glance. It was the cart which had told against him, it was the cart's place to protect him.

At the moment when the sergeant was on the point of making his descent on Gavroche, the cart, converted into a projectile and launched with all the latter's might, rolled down upon him furiously, and the sergeant, struck full in the stomach, tumbled over backwards into the gutter while his gun went off in the air.

The men of the post had rushed out pell-mell at the sergeant's shout; the shot brought on a general random discharge, after which they re-loaded their weapons and began again.

This blind-man's-buff musketry lasted for a quarter of an hour and killed several panes of glass.

In the meanwhile, Gavroche, who had retraced his steps at

full speed, halted five or six streets distant, and seated himself, panting, on the stone post which forms the corner of the Enfants-Rouges.

He listened.

After panting for a few minutes, he turned in the direction where the fusillade was raging, lifted his left hand to a level with his nose and thrust it forwards three times, as he slapped the back of his head with his right hand; an imperious gesture in which Parisian street-urchindom has condensed French irony, and which is evidently efficacious, since it has already lasted half a century.

This gayety was troubled by one bitter reflection.

"Yes," said he, "I'm splitting with laughter, I'm twisting with delight, I abound in joy, but I'm losing my way, I shall have to take a roundabout way. If I only reach the barricade in season!"

Thereupon he set out again on a run.

And as he ran:—

"Ah, by the way, where was I?" said he.

And he resumed his ditty, as he plunged rapidly through the streets, and this is what died away in the gloom:—

"Mais il reste encore des bastilles,
Et je vais mettre le holà
Dans l'orde public que voilà.
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

"Quelqu'un veut-il jouer aux quilles?
Tout l'ancien monde s'écroula
Quand la grosse boule roula.
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

"Vieux bon peuple, à coups de bequilles,
Cassons ce Louvre ou s'étala
La monarchie en falbala.
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

"Nous en avons forcé les grilles,
Le roi Charles-Dix ce jour là,
Tenait mal et se décolla.
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la."¹

¹ But some prisons still remain, and I am going to put a stop to this sort of public order. Does any one wish to play at skittles? The whole ancient world fell in ruin, when the big ball rolled. Good old folks, let us smash with our crutches that Louvre where the monarchy displayed itself in furbelows. We have forced its gates. On that day, King Charles X. did not stick well and came unglued.

The post's recourse to arms was not without result. The cart was conquered, the drunken man was taken prisoner. The first was put in the pound, the second was later on somewhat harassed before the councils of war as an accomplice. The public ministry of the day proved its indefatigable zeal in the defence of society, in this instance.

Gavroche's adventure, which has lingered as a tradition in the quarter of the Temple, is one of the most terrible souvenirs of the elderly bourgeois of the Marais, and is entitled in their memories: "The nocturnal attack by the post of the Royal Printing Establishment."

LES MISÉRABLES.

Jean Valjean.

BOOK FIRST. — THE WAR BETWEEN FOUR WALLS.

I. — THE CHARYBDIS OF THE FAUBOURG SAINT ANTOINE AND THE SCYLLA OF THE FAUBOURG DU TEMPLE.

THE two most memorable barricades which the observer of social maladies can name do not belong to the period in which the action of this work is laid. These two barricades, both of them symbols, under two different aspects, of a redoubtable situation, sprang from the earth at the time of the fatal insurrection of June, 1848, the greatest war of the streets that history has ever beheld.

It sometimes happens that, even contrary to principles, even contrary to liberty, equality, and fraternity, even contrary to the universal vote, even contrary to the government, by all for all, from the depths of its anguish, of its discouragements and its destitutions, of its fevers, of its distresses, of its miasmas, of its ignorances, of its darkness, that great and despairing body, the rabble, protests against, and that the populace wages battle against, the people.

Beggars attack the common right; the ochlocracy rises against demos.

These are melancholy days; for there is always a certain amount of night even in this madness, there is suicide in this duel, and those words which are intended to be insults — beggars, canaille, ochlocracy, populace — exhibit, alas! rather the fault of those who reign than the fault of those who suffer; rather the fault of the privileged than the fault of the disinherited.

For our own part, we never pronounce those words without pain and without respect, for when philosophy fathoms the facts to which they correspond, it often finds many a grandeur beside these miseries. Athens was an ochlocracy; the beg-

gars were the making of Holland; the populace saved Rome more than once; and the rabble followed Jesus Christ.

There is no thinker who has not at times contemplated the magnificences of the lower classes.

It was of this rabble that Saint Jerome was thinking, no doubt, and of all these poor people and all these vagabonds and all these miserable people whence sprang the apostles and the martyrs, when he uttered this mysterious saying: "*Pex urbis, lex orbis*," — the dregs of the city, the law of the earth.

The exasperations of this crowd which suffers and bleeds, its violences contrary to all sense, directed against the principles which are its life, its masterful deeds against the right, are its popular *coups d'état* and should be repressed. The man of probity sacrifices himself, and out of his very love for this crowd, he combats it. But how excusable he feels it even while holding out against it! How he venerates it even while resisting it! This is one of those rare moments, when, while doing that which it is one's duty to do, one feels something which disconcerts one, and which would dissuade one from proceeding further; one persists, it is necessary, but conscience, though satisfied, is sad, and the accomplishment of duty is complicated with a pain at the heart.

June, 1848, let us hasten to say, was an exceptional fact, and almost impossible of classification, in the philosophy of history. All the words which we have just uttered, must be discarded, when it becomes a question of this extraordinary revolt, in which one feels the holy anxiety of toil claiming its rights. It was necessary to combat it, and this was a duty, for it attacked the republic. But what was June, 1848, at bottom? A revolt of the people against itself.

Where the subject is not lost sight of, there is no digression; may we, then, be permitted to arrest the reader's attention for a moment on the two absolutely unique barricades of which we have just spoken and which characterized this insurrection.

One blocked the entrance to the Faubourg Saint Antoine; the other defended the approach to the Faubourg du Temple; those before whom these two fearful masterpieces of civil war reared themselves beneath the brilliant blue sky of June, will never forget them.

The Saint-Antoine barricade was tremendous; it was three stories high, and seven hundred feet wide. It barred the vast opening of the faubourg, that is to say, three streets, from angle to angle; ravined, jagged, cut up, divided, crenelated, with an immense rent, buttressed with piles that were bas-

tions in themselves, throwing out capes here and there, powerfully backed up by two great promontories of houses of the faubourg, it reared itself like a cyclopean dike at the end of the formidable place which had seen the 14th of July. Nineteen barricades were ranged, one behind the other, in the depths of the streets behind this principal barricade. At the very sight of it, one felt the agonizing suffering in the immense faubourg, which had reached that point of extremity when a distress may become a catastrophe. Of what was that barricade made? Of the ruins of three six-story houses demolished expressly, said some. Of the prodigy of all wraths, said others. It wore the lamentable aspect of all constructions of hatred, ruin. It might be asked: Who built this? It might also be said: Who destroyed this? It was the improvisation of the ebullition. Hold! take this door! this grating! this penthouse! this chimney-piece! this broken brazier! this cracked pot! Give all! cast away all! Push this roll, dig, dismantle, overturn, ruin everything! It was the collaboration of the pavement, the block of stone, the beam, the bar of iron, the rag, the scrap, the broken pane, the unseated chair, the cabbage-stalk, the tatter, the rag, and the malediction. It was grand and it was petty. It was the abyss parodied on the public place by hubbub. The mass beside the atom; the strip of ruined wall and the broken bowl, — threatening fraternization of every sort of rubbish. Sisyphus had thrown his rock there and Job his potsherd. Terrible, in short. It was the acropolis of the barefooted. Overturned carts broke the uniformity of the slope; an immense dray was spread out there crossways, its axle pointing heavenward, and seemed a scar on that tumultuous façade; an omnibus hoisted gayly, by main force, to the very summit of the heap, as though the architects of this bit of savagery had wished to add a touch of the street urchin humor to their terror, presented its horseless, unharnessed pole to no one knows what horses of the air. This gigantic heap, the alluvium of the revolt, figured to the mind an Ossa on Pelion of all revolutions; '93 on '89, the 9th of Thermidor on the 10th of August, the 18th of Brumaire on the 11th of January, Vendémiaire on Prairial, 1848 on 1830. The situation deserved the trouble and this barricade was worthy to figure on the very spot whence the Bastille had disappeared. If the ocean made dikes, it is thus that it would build. The fury of the flood was stamped upon this shapeless mass. What flood? The crowd. One thought one beheld hubbub petrified. One thought one heard humming above this barricade as though

there had been over their hive, enormous, dark bees of violent progress. Was it a thicket? Was it a bacchanalia? Was it a fortress? Vertigo seemed to have constructed it with blows of its wings. There was something of the cess-pool in that redoubt and something Olympian in that confusion. One there beheld in a pell-mell full of despair, the rafters of roofs, bits of garret windows with their figured paper, window sashes with their glass planted there in the ruins awaiting the cannon, wrecks of chimneys, cupboards, tables, benches, a howling topsyturveydom, and those thousand poverty-stricken things, the very refuse of the mendicant, which contain at the same time fury and nothingness. One would have said that it was the tatters of a people, rags of wood, of iron, of bronze, of stone, and that the Faubourg Saint Antoine had thrust it there at its door, with a colossal flourish of the broom making of its misery its barricade. Blocks resembling headsman's blocks, dislocated chains, pieces of woodwork with brackets having the form of gibbets, horizontal wheels projecting from the rubbish, amalgamated with this edifice of anarchy the sombre figure of the old tortures endured by the people. The barricade Saint Antoine converted everything into a weapon; everything that civil war could throw at the head of society proceeded thence; it was not combat, it was a paroxysm; the carbines which defended this redoubt, among which there were some blunderbusses, sent bits of earthenware, bones, coat-buttons, even the casters from night-stands, dangerous projectiles on account of the brass. This barricade was furious; it hurled to the clouds an inexpressible clamor; at certain moments, when provoking the army, it was covered with throngs and tempest; a tumultuous crowd of flaming heads crowned it; a swarm filled it; it had a thorny crest of guns, of sabres, of cudgels, of axes, of pikes and of bayonets; a vast red flag flapped in the wind; shouts of command, songs of attack, the roll of drums, the sobs of women and bursts of gloomy laughter from the starving were to be heard there. It was huge and living, and, like the back of an electric beast, there proceeded from it little flashes of lightning. The spirit of revolution covered with its cloud this summit where rumbled that voice of the people which resembles the voice of God; a strange majesty was emitted by this titanic basket of rubbish. It was a heap of filth and it was Sinai.

As we have said previously, it attacked in the name of the revolution — what? The revolution. It — that barricade, chance, hazard, disorder, terror, misunderstanding, the

unknown — had facing it the Constituent Assembly, the sovereignty of the people, universal suffrage, the nation, the republic; and it was the Carmagnole bidding defiance to the Marseillaise.

Immense but heroic defiance, for the old faubourg is a hero.

The faubourg and its redoubt lent each other assistance. The faubourg shouldered the redoubt, the redoubt took its stand under cover of the faubourg. The vast barricade spread out like a cliff against which the strategy of the African generals dashed itself. Its caverns, its excrescences, its warts, its gibbosities, grimaced, so to speak, and grinned beneath the smoke. The mitraille vanished in shapelessness; the bombs plunged into it; bullets only succeeded in making holes in it; what was the use of cannonading chaos? and the regiments, accustomed to the fiercest visions of war, gazed with uneasy eyes on that species of redoubt, a wild beast in its boar-like bristling and a mountain by its enormous size.

A quarter of a league away, from the corner of the Rue du Temple which debouches on the boulevard near the Château-d'Eau, if one thrust one's head boldly beyond the point formed by the front of the Dallemagne shop, one perceived in the distance, beyond the canal, in the street which mounts the slopes of Belleville at the culminating point of the rise, a strange wall reaching to the second story of the house fronts, a sort of hyphen between the houses on the right and the houses on the left, as though the street had folded back on itself its loftiest wall in order to close itself abruptly. This wall was built of paving-stones. It was straight, correct, cold, perpendicular, levelled with the square, laid out by rule and line. Cement was lacking, of course, but, as in the case of certain Roman walls, without interfering with its rigid architecture. The entablature was mathematically parallel with the base. From distance to distance, one could distinguish on the gray surface, almost invisible loopholes which resembled black threads. These loopholes were separated from each other by equal spaces. The street was deserted as far as the eye could reach. All windows and doors were closed. In the background rose this barrier, which made a blind thoroughfare of the street, a motionless and tranquil wall; no one was visible, nothing was audible; not a cry, not a sound, not a breath. A sepulchre.

The dazzling sun of June inundated this terrible thing with light.

It was the barricade of the Faubourg of the Temple.

As soon as one arrived on the spot, and caught sight of it, it was impossible, even for the boldest, not to become thoughtful before this mysterious apparition. It was adjusted, jointed, imbricated, rectilinear, symmetrical and funereal. Science and gloom met there. One felt that the chief of this barricade was a geometrician or a spectre. One looked at it and spoke low.

From time to time, if some soldier, an officer or representative of the people, chanced to traverse the deserted highway, a faint, sharp whistle was heard, and the passer-by fell dead or wounded, or, if he escaped the bullet, sometimes a biscaien was seen to ensconce itself in some closed shutter, in the interstice between two blocks of stone, or in the plaster of a wall. For the men in the barricade had made themselves two small cannons out of two cast-iron lengths of gas-pipe, plugged up at one end with tow and fire-clay. There was no waste of useless powder. Nearly every shot told. There were corpses here and there, and pools of blood on the pavement. I remember a white butterfly which went and came in the street. Summer does not abdicate.

In the neighborhood, the space beneath the *portes cochères* were encumbered with wounded.

One felt oneself aimed at by some person whom one did not see, and one understood that guns were levelled at the whole length of the street.

Massed behind the sort of sloping ridge which the vaulted canal forms at the entrance to the Faubourg du Temple, the soldiers of the attacking column, gravely and thoughtfully, watched this dismal redoubt, this immobility, this passivity, whence sprang death. Some crawled flat on their faces as far as the crest of the curve of the bridge, taking care that their shakos did not project beyond it.

The valiant Colonel Monteynard admired this barricade with a shudder. — “How that is built!” he said to a Representative. “Not one paving-stone projects beyond its neighbor. It is made of porcelain.” — At that moment, a bullet broke the cross on his breast, and he fell.

“The cowards!” people said. “Let them show themselves! Let us see them! They dare not! They are hiding!”

The barricade of the Faubourg du Temple, defended by eighty men, attacked by ten thousand, held out for three days. On the fourth, they did as at Zaatcha, as at Constantine, they pierced the houses, they came over the roofs, the barricade was taken. Not one of the eighty cowards

thought of flight, all were killed there with the exception of the leader, Barthélemy, of whom we shall speak presently.

The Saint-Antoine barricade was the tumult of thunders; the barricade of the Temple was silence. The difference between these two redoubts was the difference between the formidable and the sinister. One seemed a maw; the other a mask.

Admitting that the gigantic and gloomy insurrection of June was composed of a wrath and of an enigma, one divined in the first barricade the dragon, and behind the second the sphinx.

These two fortresses had been erected by two men named, the one, Cournet, the other, Barthélemy. Cournet made the Saint-Antoine barricade; Barthélemy the barricade of the Temple. Each was the image of the man who had built it.

Cournet was a man of lofty stature; he had broad shoulders, a red face, a crushing fist, a bold heart, a loyal soul, a sincere and terrible eye. Intrepid, energetic, irascible, stormy; the most cordial of men, the most formidable of combatants. War, strife, conflict, were the very air he breathed and put him in a good humor. He had been an officer in the navy, and, from his gestures and his voice, one divined that he sprang from the ocean, and that he came from the tempest; he carried the hurricane on into battle. With the exception of the genius, there was in Cournet something of Danton, as, with the exception of the divinity, there was in Danton something of Hercules.

Barthélemy, thin, feeble, pale, taciturn, was a sort of tragic street urchin, who, having had his ears boxed by a policeman, lay in wait for him, and killed him, and at seventeen was sent to the galleys. He came out and made this barricade.

Later on, fatal circumstance, in London, proscribed by all, Barthélemy slew Cournet. It was a funereal duel. Some time afterwards, caught in the gearing of one of those mysterious adventures in which passion plays a part, a catastrophe in which French justice sees extenuating circumstances, and in which English justice sees only death, Barthélemy was hanged. The sombre social construction is so made that, thanks to material destitution, thanks to moral obscurity, that unhappy being who possessed an intelligence, certainly firm, possibly great, began in France with the galleys, and ended in England with the gallows. Barthélemy, on occasion, flew but one flag, the black flag.

II. — WHAT IS TO BE DONE IN THE ABYSS IF ONE DOES NOT CONVERSE.

SIXTEEN years count in the subterranean education of insurrection, and June, 1848, knew a great deal more about it than June, 1832. So the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie was only an outline, and an embryo compared to the two colossal barricades which we have just sketched; but it was formidable for that epoch.

The insurgents, under the eye of Enjolras, for Marius no longer looked after anything, had made good use of the night. The barricade had been not only repaired, but augmented. They had raised it two feet. Bars of iron planted in the pavement resembled lances in rest. All sorts of rubbish brought and added from all directions complicated the external confusion. The redoubt had been cleverly made over into a wall on the inside and a thicket on the outside.

The staircase of paving-stones which permitted one to mount it like the wall of a citadel had been reconstructed.

The barricade had been put in order, the tap-room disencumbered, the kitchen appropriated for the ambulance, the dressing of the wounded completed, the powder scattered on the ground and on the tables had been gathered up, bullets run, cartridges manufactured, lint scraped, the fallen weapons re-distributed, the interior of the redoubt cleaned, the rubbish swept up, corpses removed.

They laid the dead in a heap in the Mondétour lane, of which they were still the masters. The pavement was red for a long time at that spot. Among the dead there were four National Guardsmen of the suburbs. Enjolras had their uniforms laid aside.

Enjolras had advised two hours of sleep. Advice from Enjolras was a command. Still, only three or four took advantage of it.

Feuilly employed these two hours in engraving this inscription on the wall which faced the tavern:—

LONG LIVE THE PEOPLES!

These four words, hollowed out in the rough stone with a nail, could still be read on the wall in 1848.

The three women had profited by the respite of the night to vanish definitively; which allowed the insurgents to breathe more freely.

They had found means of taking refuge in some neighboring house.

The greater part of the wounded were able, and wished, to fight still. On a litter of mattresses and trusses of straw in the kitchen, which had been converted into an ambulance, there were five men gravely wounded, two of whom were municipal guardsmen. The municipal guardsmen were attended to first.

In the tap-room there remained only Mabeuf under his black cloth and Javert bound to his post.

"This is the hall of the dead," said Enjolras.

In the interior of this hall, barely lighted by a candle at one end, the mortuary table being behind the post like a horizontal bar, a sort of vast, vague cross resulted from Javert erect and Mabeuf lying prone.

The pole of the omnibus, although snapped off by the fusillade, was still sufficiently upright to admit of their fastening the flag to it.

Enjolras, who possessed that quality of a leader, of always doing what he said, attached to this staff the bullet-ridden and bloody coat of the old man's.

No repast had been possible. There was neither bread nor meat. The fifty men in the barricade had speedily exhausted the scanty provisions of the wine-shop during the sixteen hours which they had passed there. At a given moment, every barricade inevitably becomes the raft of *la Méduse*. They were obliged to resign themselves to hunger. They had then reached the first hours of that Spartan day of the 6th of June when, in the barricade Saint-Merry, Jeanne, surrounded by the insurgents who demanded bread, replied to all combatants crying: "Something to eat!" with: "Why? It is three o'clock; at four we shall be dead."

As they could no longer eat, Enjolras forbade them to drink. He interdicted wine, and portioned out the brandy.

They had found in the cellar fifteen full bottles hermetically sealed. Enjolras and Combeferre examined them. Combeferre when he came up again said:—"It's the old stock of Father Hucheloup, who began business as a grocer."—"It must be real wine," observed Bossuet. "It's lucky that Grantaire is asleep. If he were on foot, there would be a good deal of difficulty in saving those bottles."—Enjolras, in spite of all murmurs, placed his veto on the fifteen bottles, and, in order that no one might touch them, he had them placed under the table on which Father Mabeuf was lying.

About two o'clock in the morning, they reckoned up their strength. There were still thirty-seven of them.

The day began to dawn. The torch, which had been replaced in its cavity in the pavement, had just been extinguished. The interior of the barricade, that species of tiny court-yard appropriated from the street, was bathed in shadows, and resembled, athwart the vague, twilight horror, the deck of a disabled ship. The combatants, as they went and came, moved about there like black forms. Above that terrible nesting-place of gloom the stories of the mute houses were vividly outlined; at the very top, the chimneys stood palely out. The sky was of that charming, undecided hue, which may be white and may be blue. Birds flew about in it with cries of joy. The lofty house which formed the back of the barricade, being turned to the East, had upon its roof a rosy reflection. The morning breeze ruffled the gray hair on the head of the dead man at the third-story window.

"I am delighted that the torch has been extinguished," said Courfeyrac to Feuilly. "That torch flickering in the wind annoyed me. It had the appearance of being afraid. The light of torches resembles the wisdom of cowards; it gives a bad light because it trembles."

Dawn awakens minds as it does the birds; all began to talk.

Joly, perceiving a cat prowling on a gutter, extracted philosophy from it.

"What is the cat?" he exclaimed. "It is a corrective. The good God, having made the mouse, said: 'Hullo! I have committed a blunder.' And so he made the cat. The cat is the erratum of the mouse. The mouse, plus the cat, is the proof of creation revised and corrected."

Combeferre, surrounded by students and artisans, was speaking of the dead, of Jean Prouvaire, of Bahorel, of Mabeuf, and even of Cabuc, and of Enjolras' sad severity. He said:

"Harmodius and Aristogiton, Brutus, Chereas, Stephanus, Cromwell, Charlotte Corday, Sand, have all had their moment of agony when it was too late. Our hearts quiver so, and human life is such a mystery that, even in the case of a civic murder, even in a murder for liberation, if there be such a thing, the remorse for having struck a man surpasses the joy of having served the human race."

And, such are the windings of the exchange of speech, that, a moment later, by a transition brought about through Jean

Prouvaire's verses, Combeferre was comparing the translators of the *Georgics*, Raux with Cournand, Cournand with Delille, pointing out the passages translated by Malfilâtre, particularly the prodigies of Cæsar's death; and at that word, Cæsar, the conversation reverted to Brutus.

"Cæsar," said Combeferre, "fell justly. Cicero was severe towards Cæsar, and he was right. That severity is not diatribe. When Zoilus insults Homer, when Mævius insults Virgil, when Visé insults Molière, when Pope insults Shakspeare, when Frederic insults Voltaire, it is an old law of envy and hatred which is being carried out; geniuses attract insult, great men are always more or less barked at. But Zoilus and Cicero are two different persons. Cicero is an arbiter in thought, just as Brutus is an arbiter by the sword. For my own part, I blame that last justice, the blade; but antiquity admitted it. Cæsar, the violater of the Rubicon, conferring, as though they came from him, the dignities which emanated from the people, not rising at the entrance of the senate, committed the acts of a king and almost of a tyrant, *regia ac pene tyrannica*. He was a great man; so much the worse, or so much the better; the lesson is but the more exalted. His twenty-three wounds touch me less than the spitting in the face of Jesus Christ. Cæsar is stabbed by the senators; Christ is cuffed by lackeys. One feels the God through the greater outrage."

Bossuet, who towered above the interlocutors from the summit of a heap of paving-stones, exclaimed, rifle in hand:

"Oh Cydathenæum, Oh Myrrhinus, Oh Probalinthus, Oh graces of the *Æantides*! Oh! Who will grant me to pronounce the verses of Homer like a Greek of Laurium or of Edapteen?"

III. — LIGHT AND SHADOW.

ENJOLRAS had been to make a reconnoissance. He had made his way out through Mondétour lane, gliding along close to the houses.

The insurgents, we will remark, were full of hope. The manner in which they had repulsed the attack of the preceding night had caused them to almost disdain in advance the attack at dawn. They waited for it with a smile. They had no more doubt as to their success than as to their cause. Moreover, succor was, evidently, on the way to them. They reckoned on it. With that facility of triumphant

prophecy which is one of the sources of strength in the French combatant, they divided the day which was at hand into three distinct phases. At six o'clock in the morning a regiment "which had been labored with," would turn; at noon, the insurrection of all Paris; at sunset, revolution.

They heard the alarm bell of Saint-Merry, which had not been silent for an instant since the night before; a proof that the other barricade, the great one, Jeanne's, still held out.

All these hopes were exchanged between the different groups in a sort of gay and formidable whisper which resembled the warlike hum of a hive of bees.

Enjolras re-appeared. He returned from his sombre eagle flight into outer darkness. He listened for a moment to all this joy with folded arms, and one hand on his mouth. Then, fresh and rosy in the growing whiteness of the dawn, he said:

"The whole army of Paris is to strike. A third of the army is bearing down upon the barricades in which you now are. There is the National Guard in addition. I have picked out the shakos of the fifth of the line, and the standard-bearers of the sixth legion. In one hour you will be attacked. As for the populace, it was seething yesterday, to-day it is not stirring. There is nothing to expect; nothing to hope for. Neither from a faubourg nor from a regiment. You are abandoned."

These words fell upon the buzzing of the groups, and produced on them the effect caused on a swarm of bees by the first drops of a storm. A moment of indescribable silence ensued, in which death might have been heard flitting by.

This moment was brief.

A voice from the obscurest depths of the groups shouted to Enjolras:

"So be it. Let us raise the barricade to a height of twenty feet, and let us all remain in it. Citizens, let us offer the protest of corpses. Let us show that, if the people abandon the republicans, the republicans do not abandon the people."

These words freed the thought of all from the painful cloud of individual anxieties. It was hailed with an enthusiastic acclamation.

No one ever has known the name of the man who spoke thus; he was some unknown blouse-wearer, a stranger, a man forgotten, a passing hero, that great anonymous always mingled in human crises and in social geneses who, at a given moment, utters in a supreme fashion the decisive word, and

who vanishes into the shadows after having represented for a minute, in a lightning flash, the people and God.

This inexorable resolution so thoroughly impregnated the air of the 6th of June, 1832, that, almost at the very same hour, on the barricade Saint-Merry, the insurgents were raising that clamor which has become a matter of history and which has been consigned to the documents in the case: — "What matters it whether they come to our assistance or not? Let us get ourselves killed here, to the very last man."

As the reader sees, the two barricades, though materially isolated, were in communication with each other.

IV. — MINUS FIVE, PLUS ONE.

AFTER the man who decreed the "protest of corpses" had spoken, and had given this formula of their common soul, there issued from all mouths a strangely satisfied and terrible cry, funereal in sense and triumphant in tone:

"Long live death! Let us all remain here!"

"Why all?" said Enjolras.

"All! All!"

Enjolras resumed:

"The position is good; the barricade is fine. Thirty men are enough. Why sacrifice forty?"

They replied:

"Because not one will go away."

"Citizens," cried Enjolras, and there was an almost irritated vibration in his voice, "this republic is not rich enough in men to indulge in useless expenditure of them. Vain-glory is waste. If the duty of some is to depart, that duty should be fulfilled like any other."

Enjolras, the man-principle, had over his co-religionists that sort of omnipotent power which emanates from the absolute. Still, great as was this omnipotence, a murmur arose. A leader to the very finger-tips, Enjolras, seeing that they murmured, insisted. He resumed haughtily:

"Let those who are afraid of not numbering more than thirty say so."

The murmurs redoubled.

"Besides," observed a voice in one group, "it is easy enough to talk about leaving. The barricade is hemmed in."

"Not on the side of the Halles," said Enjolras. "The Rue Mondétour is free, and through the Rue des Prêcheurs one can reach the Marché des Innocents."

"And there," went on another voice, "you would be captured. You would fall in with some grand guard of the line or the suburbs; they will spy a man passing in blouse and cap. 'Whence come you?' 'Don't you belong to the barricade?' And they will look at your hands. You smell of powder. Shot."

Enjolras, without making any reply, touched Combeferre's shoulder, and the two entered the tap-room.

They emerged thence a moment later. Enjolras held in his outstretched hands the four uniforms which he had laid aside. Combeferre followed, carrying the shoulder-belts and the shakos.

"With this uniform," said Enjolras, "you can mingle with the ranks and escape; here is enough for four." And he flung on the ground, deprived of its pavement, the four uniforms.

No wavering took place in his stoical audience. Combeferre took the word.

"Come," said he, "you must have a little pity. Do you know what the question is here? It is a question of women. See here. Are there women or are there not? Are there children or are there not? Are there mothers, yes or no, who rock cradles with their foot and who have a lot of little ones around them? Let that man of you who has never beheld a nurse's breast raise his hand. Ah! you want to get yourselves killed, so do I—I, who am speaking to you; but I do not want to feel the phantoms of women wreathing their arms around me. Die, if you will, but don't make others die. Suicides like that which is on the brink of accomplishment here are sublime; but suicide is narrow, and does not admit of extension; and as soon as it touches your neighbors, suicide is murder. Think of the little blond heads; think of the white locks. Listen, Enjolras has just told me that he saw at the corner of the Rue du Cygne a lighted casement, a candle in a poor window, on the fifth floor, and on the pane the quivering shadow of the head of an old woman, who had the air of having spent the night in watching. Perhaps she is the mother of some one of you. Well, let that man go, and make haste to say to his mother: 'Here I am, mother!' Let him feel at ease, the task here will be performed all the same. When one supports one's relatives by one's toil, one has not the right to sacrifice oneself. That is deserting one's family. And those who have daughters! what are you thinking of? You get yourselves killed, you are dead, that is well. And to-

morrow? Young girls without bread — that is a terrible thing. Man begs, woman sells. Ah! those charming and gracious beings, so gracious and so sweet, who have bonnets of flowers, who fill the house with purity, who sing and prattle, who are like a living perfume, who prove the existence of angels in heaven by the purity of virgins on earth, that Jeanne, that Lise, that Mimi, those adorable and honest creatures who are your blessings and your pride, ah! good God, they will suffer hunger! What do you want me to say to you? There is a market for human flesh; and it is not with your shadowy hands, shuddering around them, that you will prevent them from entering it! Think of the street, think of the pavement covered with passers-by, think of the shops past which women go and come with necks all bare, and through the mire. These women, too, were pure once. Think of your sisters, those of you who have them. Misery, prostitution, the police, Saint-Lazare — that is what those beautiful, delicate girls, those fragile marvels of modesty, gentleness and loveliness, fresher than lilacs in the month of May, will come to. Ah! you have got yourselves killed! You are no longer on hand! That is well; you have wished to release the people from Royalty, and you deliver over your daughters to the police. Friends, have a care, have mercy. Women, unhappy women, we are not in the habit of bestowing much thought on them. We trust to the women not having received a man's education, we prevent their reading, we prevent their thinking, we prevent their occupying themselves with politics; will you prevent them from going to the dead-house this evening, and recognizing your bodies? Let us see, those who have families must be tractable, and shake hands with us and take themselves off, and leave us here alone to attend to this affair. I know well that courage is required to leave, that it is hard; but the harder it is, the more meritorious. You say: 'I have a gun, I am at the barricade; so much the worse, I shall remain there.' So much the worse is easily said. My friends, there is a morrow; you will not be here to-morrow, but your families will; and what sufferings! See, here is a pretty, healthy child, with cheeks like an apple, who babbles, prattles, chatters, who laughs, who smells sweet beneath your kiss, — and do you know what becomes of him when he is abandoned? I have seen one, a very small creature, no taller than that. His father was dead. Poor people had taken him in out of charity, but they had bread only for themselves. The child was always hungry. It

was winter. He did not cry. You could see him approach the stove, in which there was never any fire, and whose pipe, you know, was of mastic and yellow clay. His breathing was hoarse, his face livid, his limbs flaccid, his belly prominent. He said nothing. If you spoke to him, he did not answer. He is dead. He was taken to the Necker Hospital, where I saw him. I was house-surgeon in that hospital. Now, if there are any fathers among you, fathers whose happiness it is to stroll on Sundays holding their child's tiny hand in their robust hand, let each one of those fathers imagine that this child is his own. That poor brat, I remember, and I seem to see him now, when he lay nude on the dissecting table, how his ribs stood out on his skin like the graves beneath the grass in a cemetery. A sort of mud was found in his stomach. There were ashes in his teeth. Come, let us examine ourselves conscientiously and take counsel with our heart. Statistics show that the mortality among abandoned children is fifty-five per cent. I repeat, it is a question of women, it concerns mothers, it concerns young girls, it concerns little children. Who is talking to you of yourselves? We know well what you are; we know well that you are all brave, *parbleu!* we know well that you all have in your souls the joy and the glory of giving your life for the great cause; we know well that you feel yourselves elected to die usefully and magnificently, and that each one of you clings to his share in the triumph. Very well. But you are not alone in this world. There are other beings of whom you must think. You must not be egoists."

All dropped their heads with a gloomy air.

Strange contradictions of the human heart at its most sublime moments. Combeferre, who spoke thus, was not an orphan. He recalled the mothers of other men, and forgot his own. He was about to get himself killed. He was "an egoist."

Marius, fasting, fevered, having emerged in succession from all hope, and having been stranded in grief, the most sombre of shipwrecks, and saturated with violent emotions and conscious that the end was near, had plunged deeper and deeper into that visionary stupor which always precedes the fatal hour voluntarily accepted.

A physiologist might have studied in him the growing symptoms of that febrile absorption known to, and classified by, science, and which is to suffering what voluptuousness is to pleasure. Despair, also, has its ecstasy. Marius had

reached this point. He looked on at everything as from without; as we have said, things which passed before him seemed far away; he made out the whole, but did not perceive the details. He beheld men going and coming as through a flame. He heard voices speaking as at the bottom of an abyss.

But this moved him. There was in this scene, a point which pierced and roused even him. He had but one idea now, to die; and he did not wish to be turned aside from it, but he reflected, in his gloomy somnambulism, that while destroying himself, he was not prohibited from saving some one else.

He raised his voice.

"Enjolras and Combeferre are right," said he; "no unnecessary sacrifice. I join them, and you must make haste. Combeferre has said convincing things to you. There are some among you who have families, mothers, sisters, wives, children. Let such leave the ranks."

No one stirred.

"Married men and the supporters of families, step out of the ranks!" repeated Marius.

His authority was great. Enjolras was certainly the head of the barricade, but Marius was its savior.

"I order it," cried Enjolras.

"I entreat you," said Marius.

Then, touched by Combeferre's words, shaken by Enjolras' order, touched by Marius' entreaty, these heroic men began to denounce each other. — "It is true," said one young man to a full grown man, "you are the father of a family. Go." — "It is your duty rather," retorted the man, "you have two sisters whom you maintain." — And an unprecedented controversy broke forth. Each struggled to determine which should not allow himself to be placed at the door of the tomb.

"Make haste," said Courfeyrac, "in another quarter of an hour it will be too late."

"Citizens," pursued Enjolras, "this is the Republic, and universal suffrage reigns. Do you yourselves designate those who are to go."

They obeyed. After the expiration of a few minutes, five were unanimously selected and stepped out of the ranks.

"There are five of them!" exclaimed Marius.

There were only four uniforms.

"Well," began the five, "one must stay behind."

And then a struggle arose as to who should remain, and who should find reasons for the others not remaining. The generous quarrel began afresh.

"You have a wife who loves you." — "You have your aged mother." — "You have neither father nor mother, and what is to become of your three little brothers?" — "You are the father of five children." — "You have a right to live, you are only seventeen, it is too early for you to die."

These great revolutionary barricades were assembling points for heroism. The improbable was simple there. These men did not astonish each other.

"Be quick," repeated Courfeyrac.

Men shouted to Marius from the groups:

"Do you designate who is to remain."

"Yes," said the five, "choose. We will obey you."

Marius did not believe that he was capable of another emotion. Still, at this idea, that of choosing a man for death, his blood rushed back to his heart. He would have turned pale, had it been possible for him to become any paler.

He advanced towards the five, who smiled upon him, and each, with his eyes full of that grand flame which one beholds in the depths of history hovering over Thermopylae, cried to him:

"Me! me! me!"

And Marius stupidly counted them; there were still five of them! Then his glance dropped to the four uniforms.

At that moment, a fifth uniform fell, as if from heaven, upon the other four.

The fifth man was saved.

Marius raised his eyes and recognized M. Fauchelevent.

Jean Valjean had just entered the barricade.

He had arrived by way of Mondétour lane, whether by dint of inquiries made, or by instinct, or chance. Thanks to his dress of a National Guardsman, he had made his way without difficulty.

The sentinel stationed by the insurgents in the Rue Mondétour, had no occasion to give the alarm for a single National Guardsman, and he had allowed the latter to entangle himself in the street, saying to himself: "Probably it is a reinforcement, in any case it is a prisoner." The moment was too grave to admit of the sentinel abandoning his duty and his post of observation.

At the moment when Jean Valjean entered the redoubt, no one had noticed him, all eyes being fixed on the five chosen

men and the four uniforms. Jean Valjean also had seen and heard, and he had silently removed his coat and flung it on the pile with the rest.

The emotion aroused was indescribable.

"Who is this man?" demanded Bossuet.

"He is a man who saves others," replied Combeferre.

Marius added in a grave voice:

"I know him."

This guarantee satisfied every one.

Enjolras turned to Jean Valjean.

"Welcome, citizen."

And he added:

"You know that we are about to die."

Jean Valjean, without replying, helped the insurgent whom he was saving to don his uniform.

V.—THE HORIZON WHICH ONE BEHOLDS FROM THE SUMMIT OF A BARRICADE.

THE situation of all in that fatal hour and that pitiless place, had as result and culminating point Enjolras' supreme melancholy.

Enjolras bore within him the plenitude of the revolution; he was incomplete, however, so far as the absolute can be so; he had too much of Saint-Just about him, and not enough of Anacharsis Cloots; still, his mind, in the society of the Friends of the A B C, had ended by undergoing a certain polarization from Combeferre's ideas; for some time past, he had been gradually emerging from the narrow form of dogma, and had allowed himself to incline to the broadening influence of progress, and he had come to accept, as a definitive and magnificent evolution, the transformation of the great French Republic, into the immense human republic. As far as the immediate means were concerned, a violent situation being given, he wished to be violent; on that point, he never varied; and he remained of that epic and redoubtable school which is summed up in the words: "Eighty-three." Enjolras was standing erect on the staircase of paving-stones, one elbow resting on the stock of his gun. He was engaged in thought; he quivered, as at the passage of prophetic breaths; places where death is have these effects of tripods. A sort of stifled fire darted from his eyes, which were filled with an inward look. All at once he threw back his head, his blond locks fell back like those of an angel on the sombre

quadriga made of stars, they were like the mane of a startled lion in the flaming of an halo, and Enjolras cried :

“Citizens, do you picture the future to yourselves ? The streets of cities inundated with light, green branches on the thresholds, nations sisters, men just, old men blessing children, the past loving the present, thinkers entirely at liberty, believers on terms of full equality, for religion heaven, God the direct priest, human conscience become an altar, no more hatreds, the fraternity of the workshop and the school, for sole penalty and recompense fame, work for all, right for all, peace over all, no more bloodshed, no more wars, happy mothers ! To conquer matter is the first step ; to realize the ideal is the second. Reflect on what progress has already accomplished. Formerly, the first human races beheld with terror the hydra pass before their eyes, breathing on the waters, the dragon which vomited flame, the griffin who was the monster of the air, and who flew with the wings of an eagle and the talons of a tiger ; fearful beasts which were above man. Man, nevertheless, spread his snares, consecrated by intelligence, and finally conquered these monsters. We have vanquished the hydra, and it is called the locomotive ; we are on the point of vanquishing the griffin, we already grasp it, and it is called the balloon. On the day when this Promethean task shall be accomplished, and when man shall have definitively harnessed to his will the triple Chimæra of antiquity, the hydra, the dragon and the griffin, he will be the master of water, fire, and of air, and he will be for the rest of animated creation that which the ancient gods formerly were to him. Courage, and onward ! Citizens, whither are we going ? To science made government, to the force of things become the sole public force, to the natural law, having in itself its sanction and its penalty and promulgating itself by evidence, to a dawn of truth corresponding to a dawn of day. We are advancing to the union of peoples ; we are advancing to the unity of man. No more fictions ; no more parasites. The real governed by the true, that is the goal. Civilization will hold its assizes at the summit of Europe, and, later on, at the centre of continents, in a grand parliament of the intelligence. Something similar has already been seen. The amphictyons had two sittings a year, one at Delphos, the seat of the gods, the other at Thermopylæ, the place of heroes. Europe will have her amphictyons ; the globe will have its amphictyons. France bears this sublime future in her breast. This is the gestation of the nineteenth century. That which Greece

sketched out is worthy of being finished by France. Listen to me, you, Feuilly, valiant artisan, man of the people. I revere you. Yes, you clearly behold the future, yes, you are right. You had neither father nor mother, Feuilly; you adopted humanity for your mother and right for your father. You are about to die, that is to say to triumph, here. Citizens, whatever happens to-day, through our defeat as well as through our victory, it is a revolution that we are about to create. As conflagrations light up a whole city, so revolutions illuminate the whole human race. And what is the revolution that we shall cause? I have just told you, the Revolution of the True. From a political point of view, there is but a single principle; the sovereignty of man over himself. This sovereignty of myself over myself is called Liberty. Where two or three of these sovereignties are combined, the state begins. But in that association there is no abdication. Each sovereignty concedes a certain quantity of itself, for the purpose of forming the common right. This quantity is the same for all of us. This identity of concession which each makes to all, is called Equality. Common right is nothing else than the protection of all beaming on the right of each. This protection of all over each is called Fraternity. The point of intersection of all these assembled sovereignties is called society. This intersection being a junction, this point is a knot. Hence what is called the social bond. Some say social contract; which is the same thing, the word contract being etymologically formed with the idea of a bond. Let us come to an understanding about equality; for, if liberty is the summit, equality is the base. Equality, citizens, is not wholly a surface vegetation, a society of great blades of grass and tiny oaks; a proximity of jealousies which render each other null and void; legally speaking, it is all aptitudes possessed of the same opportunity; politically, it is all votes possessed of the same weight; religiously, it is all consciences possessed of the same right. Equality has an organ: gratuitous and obligatory instruction. The right to the alphabet, that is where the beginning must be made. The primary school imposed on all, the secondary school offered to all, that is the law. From an identical school, an identical society will spring. Yes, instruction! light! light! everything comes from light, and to it everything returns. Citizens, the nineteenth century is great, but the twentieth century will be happy. Then, there will be nothing more like the history of old, we shall no longer, as to-day, have to

fear a conquest, an invasion, a usurpation, a rivalry of nations, arms in hand, an interruption of civilization depending on a marriage of kings, on a birth in hereditary tyrannies, a partition of peoples by a congress, a dismemberment because of the failure of a dynasty, a combat of two religions meeting face to face, like two bucks in the dark, on the bridge of the infinite; we shall no longer have to fear famine, farming out, prostitution arising from distress, misery from the failure of work and the scaffold and the sword, and battles and the ruffianism of chance in the forest of events. One might almost say: There will be no more events. We shall be happy. The human race will accomplish its law, as the terrestrial globe accomplishes its law; harmony will be re-established between the soul and the star; the soul will gravitate around the truth, as the planet around the light. Friends, the present hour in which I am addressing you, is a gloomy hour; but these are terrible purchases of the future. A revolution is a toll. Oh! the human race will be delivered, raised up, consoled! We affirm it on this barrier. Whence should proceed that cry of love, if not from the heights of sacrifice? Oh my brothers, this is the point of junction, of those who think and of those who suffer; this barricade is not made of paving-stones, nor of joists, nor of bits of iron; it is made of two heaps, a heap of ideas, and a heap of woes. Here misery meets the ideal. The day embraces the night, and says to it: 'I am about to die, and thou shalt be born again with me.' From the embrace of all desolations faith leaps forth. Sufferings bring hither their agony and ideas their immortality. This agony and this immortality are about to join and constitute our death. Brothers, he who dies here dies in the radiance of the future, and we are entering a tomb all flooded with the dawn."

Enjolras paused rather than became silent; his lips continued to move silently, as though he were talking to himself, which caused them all to gaze attentively at him, in the endeavor to hear more. There was no applause; but they whispered together for a long time. Speech being a breath, the rustling of intelligences resembles the rustling of leaves.

VI. — MARIUS HAGGARD, JAVERT LACONIC.

LET us narrate what was passing in Marius' thoughts.

Let the reader recall the state of his soul. We have just recalled it, everything was a vision to him now. His judg-

ment was disturbed. Marius, let us insist on this point, was under the shadow of the great, dark wings which are spread over those in the death agony. He felt that he had entered the tomb, it seemed to him that he was already on the other side of the wall, and, he no longer beheld the faces of the living except with the eyes of one dead.

How did M. Fauchelevent come there? Why was he there? What had he come there to do? Marius did not address all these questions to himself. Besides, since our despair has this peculiarity, that it envelops others as well as ourselves, it seemed logical to him that all the world should come thither to die.

Only, he thought of Cosette with a pang at his heart.

However, M. Fauchelevent did not speak to him, did not look at him, and had not even the air of hearing him, when Marius raised his voice to say: "I know him."

As far as Marius was concerned, this attitude of M. Fauchelevent was comforting, and, if such a word can be used for such impressions, we should say that it pleased him. He had always felt the absolute impossibility of addressing that enigmatical man, who was, in his eyes, both equivocal and imposing. Moreover, it had been a long time since he had seen him; and this still further augmented the impossibility for Marius' timid and reserved nature.

The five chosen men left the barricade by way of Mondétour lane; they bore a perfect resemblance to members of the National Guard. One of them wept as he took his leave. Before setting out, they embraced those who remained.

When the five men sent back to life had taken their departure, Enjolras thought of the man who had been condemned to death.

He entered the tap-room. Javert, still bound to the post, was engaged in meditation.

"Do you want anything?" Enjolras asked him.

Javert replied: "When are you going to kill me?"

"Wait. We need all our cartridges just at present."

"Then give me a drink," said Javert.

Enjolras himself offered him a glass of water, and, as Javert was pinioned, he helped him to drink.

"Is that all?" inquired Enjolras.

"I am uncomfortable against this post," replied Javert. "You are not tender to have left me to pass the night here. Bind me as you please, but you surely might lay me out on a table like that other man."

And with a motion of the head, he indicated the body of M. Mabeuf.

There was, as the reader will remember, a long, broad table at the end of the room, on which they had been running bullets and making cartridges. All the cartridges having been made, and all the powder used, this table was free.

At Enjolras' command, four insurgents unbound Javert from the post. While they were loosing him, a fifth held a bayonet against his breast.

Leaving his arms tied behind his back, they placed about his feet a slender but stout whip-cord, as is done to men on the point of mounting the scaffold, which allowed him to take steps about fifteen inches in length, and made him walk to the table at the end of the room, where they laid him down, closely bound about the middle of the body.

By way of further security, and by means of a rope fastened to his neck, they added to the system of ligatures which rendered every attempt at escape impossible, that sort of bond which is called in prisons a martingale, which, starting at the neck, forks on the stomach, and meets the hands, after passing between the legs.

While they were binding Javert, a man standing on the threshold was surveying him with singular attention. The shadow cast by this man made Javert turn his head. He raised his eyes, and recognized Jean Valjean. He did not even start, but dropped his lids proudly and confined himself to the remark: "It is perfectly simple."

VII.—THE SITUATION BECOMES AGGRAVATED.

THE daylight was increasing rapidly. Not a window was opened, not a door stood ajar; it was the dawn but not the awaking. The end of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, opposite the barricade, had been evacuated by the troops, as we have stated, it seemed to be free, and presented itself to passers-by with a sinister tranquillity. The Rue Saint-Denis was as dumb as the avenue of Sphinxes at Thebes. Not a living being in the cross-roads, which gleamed white in the light of the sun. Nothing is so mournful as this light in deserted streets. Nothing was to be seen, but there was something to be heard. A mysterious movement was going on at a certain distance. It was evident that the critical moment was approaching. As on the previous evening, the sentinels had come in; but this time all had come.

The barricade was stronger than on the occasion of the first attack. Since the departure of the five, they had increased its height still further.

On the advice of the sentinel who had examined the region of the Halles, Enjolras, for fear of a surprise in the rear, came to a serious decision. He had the small gut of the Mondétour lane, which had been left open up to that time, barricaded. For this purpose, they tore up the pavement for the length of several houses more. In this manner, the barricade, walled on three streets, in front on the Rue de la Chanvrière, to the left on the Rues du Cygne and de la Petite Truanderie, to the right on the Rue Mondétour, was really almost impregnable; it is true that they were fatally hemmed in there. It had three fronts, but no exit. — "A fortress but a rat hole too," said Courfeyrac with a laugh.

Enjolras had about thirty paving-stones "torn up in excess," said Bossuet, piled up near the door of the wine-shop.

The silence was now so profound in the quarter whence the attack must needs come, that Enjolras had each man resume his post of battle.

An allowance of brandy was doled out to each.

Nothing is more curious than a barricade preparing for an assault. Each man selects his place as though at the theatre. They jostle, and elbow and crowd each other. There are some who make stalls of paving-stones. Here is a corner of the wall which is in the way, it is removed; here is a redan which may afford protection, they take shelter behind it. Left-handed men are precious; they take the places that are inconvenient to the rest. Many arrange to fight in a sitting posture. They wish to be at ease to kill, and to die comfortably. In the sad war of June, 1848, an insurgent who was a formidable marksman, and who was firing from the top of a terrace upon a roof, had a reclining-chair brought there for his use; a charge of grape-shot found him out there.

As soon as the leader has given the order to clear the decks for action, all disorderly movements cease; there is no more pulling from one another; there are no more coteries; no more asides, there is no more holding aloof; everything in their spirits converges in, and changes into, a waiting for the assailants. A barricade before the arrival of danger is chaos; in danger, it is discipline itself. Peril produces order.

As soon as Enjolras had seized his double-barrelled rifle, and had placed himself in a sort of embrasure which he had reserved for himself, all the rest held their peace. A series

of faint, sharp noises resounded confusedly along the wall of paving-stones. It was the men cocking their guns.

Moreover, their attitudes were prouder, more confident than ever; the excess of sacrifice strengthens; they no longer cherished any hope, but they had despair, despair, — the last weapon, which sometimes gives victory; Virgil has said so. Supreme resources spring from extreme resolutions. To embark in death is sometimes the means of escaping a shipwreck; and the lid of the coffin becomes a plank of safety.

As on the preceding evening, the attention of all was directed, we might almost say leaned upon, the end of the street, now lighted up and visible.

They had not long to wait. A stir began distinctly in the Saint-Leu quarter, but it did not resemble the movement of the first attack. A clashing of chains, the uneasy jolting of a mass, the click of brass skipping along the pavement, a sort of solemn uproar, announced that some sinister construction of iron was approaching. There arose a tremor in the bosoms of these peaceful old streets, pierced and built for the fertile circulation of interests and ideas, and which are not made for the horrible rumble of the wheels of war.

The fixity of eye in all the combatants upon the extremity of the street became ferocious.

A cannon made its appearance.

Artillery-men were pushing the piece; it was in firing trim; the fore-carriage had been detached; two upheld the gun-carriage, four were at the wheels; others followed with the caisson. They could see the smoke of the burning lint-stock.

"Fire!" shouted Enjolras.

The whole barricade fired, the report was terrible; an avalanche of smoke covered and effaced both cannon and men; after a few seconds, the cloud dispersed, and the cannon and men re-appeared; the gun-crew had just finished rolling it slowly, correctly, without haste, into position facing the barricade. Not one of them had been struck. Then the captain of the piece, bearing down upon the breech in order to raise the muzzle, began to point the cannon with the gravity of an astronomer levelling a telescope.

"Bravo for the cannoneers!" cried Bossuet.

And the whole barricade clapped their hands.

A moment later, squarely planted in the very middle of the street, astride of the gutter the piece was ready for action. A formidable pair of jaws yawned on the barricade.

"Come, merrily now!" ejaculated Courfeyrac. "That's the brutal part of it. After the fillip on the nose, the blow from the fist. The army is reaching out its big paw to us. The barricade is going to be severely shaken up. The fusillade tries, the cannon takes."

"It is a piece of eight, new model, brass," added Combeferre. "Those pieces are liable to burst as soon as the proportion of ten parts of tin to one hundred of brass is exceeded. The excess of tin renders them too tender. Then it comes to pass that they have caves and chambers when looked at from the vent hole. In order to obviate this danger, and to render it possible to force the charge, it may become necessary to return to the process of the fourteenth century, hooping, and to encircle the piece on the outside with a series of unwelded steel bands, from the breech to the trunnions. In the meantime, they remedy this defect as best they may; they manage to discover where the holes are located in the vent of a cannon, by means of a searcher. But there is a better method, with Gribeauval's movable star."

"In the sixteenth century," remarked Bossuet, "they used to rifle cannon."

"Yes," replied Combeferre, "that augments the projectile force, but diminishes the accuracy of the firing. In firing at short range, the trajectory is not as rigid as could be desired, the parabola is exaggerated, the line of the projectile is no longer sufficiently rectilinear to allow of its striking intervening objects, which is, nevertheless, a necessity of battle, the importance of which increases with the proximity of the enemy and the precipitation of the discharge. This defect of the tension of the curve of the projectile in the rifled cannon of the sixteenth century arose from the smallness of the charge; small charges for that sort of engine are imposed by the ballistic necessities, such, for instance, as the preservation of the gun-carriage. In short, that despot, the cannon, cannot do all that it desires; force is a great weakness. A cannon-ball only travels six hundred leagues an hour; light travels seventy thousand leagues a second. Such is the superiority of Jesus Christ over Napoleon."

"Reload your guns," said Enjolras.

How was the casing of the barricade going to behave under the cannon-balls? Would they effect a breach? That was the question. While the insurgents were reloading their guns, the artillery-men were loading the cannon.

The anxiety in the redoubt was profound.

The shot sped the report burst forth.

"Present!" shouted a joyous voice.

And Gavroche flung himself into the barricade just as the ball dashed against it.

He came from the direction of the Rue du Cygne, and he had nimbly climbed over the auxiliary barricade which fronted on the labyrinth of the Rue de la Petite Truanderie.

Gavroche produced a greater sensation in the barricade than the cannon-ball.

The ball buried itself in the mass of rubbish. At the most there was an omnibus wheel broken, and the old Anceau cart was demolished. On seeing this, the barricade burst into a laugh.

"Go on!" shouted Bossuet to the artillerymen.

VIII.—THE ARTILLERY-MEN COMPEL PEOPLE TO TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY.

THEY flocked round Gavroche. But he had no time to tell anything. Marius drew him aside with a shudder.

"What are you doing here?"

"Hullo!" said the child, "what are you doing here yourself?"

And he stared at Marius intently with his epic effrontery. His eyes grew larger with the proud light within them.

It was with an accent of severity that Marius continued:

"Who told you to come back? Did you deliver my letter at the address?"

Gavroche was not without some compunctions in the matter of that letter. In his haste to return to the barricade, he had got rid of it rather than delivered it. He was forced to acknowledge to himself that he had confided it rather lightly to that stranger whose face he had not been able to make out. It is true that the man was bareheaded, but that was not sufficient. In short, he had been administering to himself little inward remonstrances and he feared Marius' reproaches. In order to extricate himself from the predicament, he took the simplest course; he lied abominably.

"Citizen, I delivered the letter to the porter. The lady was asleep. She will have the letter when she wakes up."

Marius had had two objects in sending that letter: to bid farewell to Cosette and to save Gavroche. He was obliged to content himself with the half of his desire.

The despatch of his letter and the presence of M. Fauche-

levant in the barricade, was a coincidence which occurred to him. He pointed out M. Fauchelevant to Gavroche.

"Do you know that man?"

"No," said Gavroche.

Gavroche had, in fact, as we have just mentioned, seen Jean Valjean only at night.

The troubled and unhealthy conjectures which had outlined themselves in Marius' mind, were dissipated. Did he know M. Fauchelevant's opinions? Perhaps M. Fauchelevant was a republican. Hence his very natural presence in this combat.

In the meanwhile, Gavroche was shouting, at the other end of the barricade: "My gun!"

Courfeyrac had it returned to him.

Gavroche warned "his comrades" as he called them, that the barricade was blocked. He had had great difficulty in reaching it. A battalion of the line whose arms were piled in the Rue de la Petite Truanderie was on the watch on the side of the Rue du Cygne; on the opposite side, the municipal guard occupied the Rue des Prêcheurs. The bulk of the army was facing them in front.

This information given, Gavroche added:

"I authorize you to hit 'em a tremendous whack."

Meanwhile, Enjolras was straining his ears and watching at his embrasure.

The assailants, dissatisfied, no doubt, with their shot, had not repeated it.

A company of infantry of the line had come up and occupied the end of the street behind the piece of ordnance. The soldiers were tearing up the pavement and constructing with the stones a small, low wall, a sort of side-work not more than eighteen inches high, and facing the barricade. In the angle at the left of this epaulement, there was visible the head of the column of a battalion from the suburbs massed in the Rue Saint-Denis.

Enjolras, on the watch, thought he distinguished the peculiar sound which is produced when the shells of grape-shot are drawn from the caissons, and he saw the commander of the piece change the elevation and incline the mouth of the cannon slightly to the left. Then the cannoneers began to load the piece. The chief seized the lin-stock himself and lowered it to the vent.

"Down with your heads, hug the wall!" shouted Enjolras, "and all on your knees along the barricade!"

The insurgents who were straggling in front of the wine-shop, and who had quitted their posts of combat on Gavroche's arrival, rushed pell-mell towards the barricade; but before Enjolras' order could be executed, the discharge took place with the terrifying rattle of a round of grape-shot. This is what it was, in fact.

The charge had been aimed at the cut in the redoubt, and had there rebounded from the wall; and this terrible rebound had produced two dead and three wounded.

If this were continued, the barricade was no longer tenable. The grape-shot made its way in.

A murmur of consternation arose.

"Let us prevent the second discharge," said Enjolras.

And, lowering his rifle, he took aim at the captain of the gun, who, at that moment, was bearing down on the breach of his gun and rectifying and definitely fixing its pointing.

The captain of the piece was a handsome sergeant of artillery, very young, blond, with a very gentle face, and the intelligent air peculiar to that predestined and redoubtable weapon which, by dint of perfecting itself in horror, must end in killing war.

Combeferre, who was standing beside Enjolras, scrutinized this young man.

"What a pity!" said Combeferre. "What hideous things these butcheries are! Come, when there are no more kings, there will be no more war. Enjolras, you are taking aim at that sergeant, you are not looking at him. Fancy, he is a charming young man; he is intrepid; it is evident that he is thoughtful; those young artillery-men are very well educated; he has a father, a mother, a family; he is probably in love; he is not more than five and twenty at the most; he might be your brother."

"He is," said Enjolras.

"Yes," replied Combeferre, "he is mine too. Well, let us not kill him."

"Let me alone. It must be done."

And a tear trickled slowly down Enjolras' marble cheek.

At the same moment, he pressed the trigger of his rifle. The flame leaped forth. The artillery-man turned round twice, his arms extended in front of him, his head uplifted, as though for breath, then he fell with his side on the gun, and lay there motionless. They could see his back, from the centre of which there flowed directly a stream of blood. The ball had traversed his breast from side to side. He was dead.

He had to be carried away and replaced by another. Several minutes were thus gained, in fact.

IX. — EMPLOYMENT OF THE OLD TALENTS OF A POACHER AND THAT INFALLIBLE MARKSMANSHIP WHICH INFLUENCED THE CONDEMNATION OF 1796.

OPINIONS were exchanged in the barricade. The firing from the gun was about to begin again. Against that grape-shot, they could not hold out a quarter of an hour longer. It was absolutely necessary to deaden the blows.

Enjolras issued this command:

"We must place a mattress there."

"We have none," said Combeferre, "the wounded are lying on them."

Jean Valjean, who was seated apart on a stone post, at the corner of the tavern, with his gun between his knees, had, up to that moment, taken no part in anything that was going on. He did not appear to hear the combatants saying around him: "Here is a gun that is doing nothing."

At the order issued by Enjolras, he rose.

It will be remembered that, on the arrival of the rabble in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, an old woman, foreseeing the bullets, had placed her mattress in front of her window. This window, an attic window, was on the roof of a six-story house situated a little beyond the barricade. The mattress, placed cross-wise, supported at the bottom on two poles for drying linen, was upheld at the top by two ropes, which, at that distance, looked like two threads, and which were attached to two nails planted in the window frames. These ropes were distinctly visible, like hairs, against the sky.

"Can some one lend me a double-barrelled rifle?" said Jean Valjean.

Enjolras, who had just re-loaded his, handed it to him.

Jean Valjean took aim at the attic window and fired.

One of the mattress ropes was cut.

The mattress now hung by one thread only.

Jean Valjean fired the second charge. The second rope lashed the panes of the attic window. The mattress slipped between the two poles and fell into the street.

The barricade applauded.

All voices cried:

"Here is a mattress!"

"Yes," said Combeferre, "but who will go and fetch it?"

The mattress had, in fact, fallen outside the barricade, between besiegers and besieged. Now, the death of the sergeant of artillery having exasperated the troop, the soldiers had, for several minutes, been lying flat on their stomachs behind the line of paving-stones which they had erected, and, in order to supply the forced silence of the piece, which was quiet while its service was in course of reorganization, they had opened fire on the barricade. The insurgents did not reply to this musketry, in order to spare their ammunition. The fusillade broke against the barricade; but the street, which it filled, was terrible.

Jean Valjean stepped out of the cut, entered the street, traversed the storm of bullets, walked up to the mattress, hoisted it upon his back, and returned to the barricade.

He placed the mattress in the cut with his own hands. He fixed it there against the wall in such a manner that the artillery-men should not see it.

That done, they awaited the next discharge of grape-shot.

It was not long in coming.

The cannon vomited forth its package of buck-shot with a roar. But there was no rebound. The effect which they had foreseen had been attained. The barricade was saved.

"Citizen," said Enjolras to Jean Valjean, "the Republic thanks you."

Bossuet admired and laughed. He exclaimed:

"It is immoral that a mattress should have so much power. Triumph of that which yields over that which strikes with lightning. But never mind, glory to the mattress which annuls a cannon!"

X. — DAWN.

At that moment, Cosette awoke.

Her chamber was narrow, neat, unobtrusive, with a long sash-window, facing the East on the back court-yard of the house.

Cosette knew nothing of what was going on in Paris. She had not been there on the preceding evening, and she had already retired to her chamber when Toussaint had said:

"It appears that there is a row."

Cosette had slept only a few hours, but soundly. She had had sweet dreams, which possibly arose from the fact that her little bed was very white. Some one, who was Marius, had appeared to her in the light. She awoke with the sun

in her eyes, which, at first, produced on her the effect of being a continuation of her dream. Her first thought on emerging from this dream was a smiling one. Cosette felt herself thoroughly reassured. Like Jean Valjean, she had, a few hours previously, passed through that reaction of the soul which absolutely will not hear of unhappiness. She began to cherish hope, with all her might, without knowing why. Then she felt a pang at her heart. It was three days since she had seen Marius. But she said to herself that he must have received her letter, that he knew where she was, and that he was so clever that he would find means of reaching her. — And that certainly to-day, and perhaps that very morning. — It was broad daylight, but the rays of light were very horizontal; she thought that it was very early, but that she must rise, nevertheless, in order to receive Marius.

She felt that she could not live without Marius, and that, consequently, that was sufficient and that Marius would come. No objection was valid. All this was certain. It was monstrous enough already to have suffered for three days. Marius absent three days, this was horrible on the part of the good God. Now, this cruel teasing from on high had been gone through with. Marius was about to arrive, and he would bring good news. Youth is made thus; it quickly dries its eyes; it finds sorrow useless and does not accept it. Youth is the smile of the future in the presence of an unknown quantity, which is itself. It is natural to it to be happy. It seems as though its respiration were made of hope.

Moreover, Cosette could not remember what Marius had said to her on the subject of this absence which was to last only one day, and what explanation of it he had given her. Every one has noticed with what nimbleness a coin which one has dropped on the ground rolls away and hides, and with what art it renders itself undiscoverable. There are thoughts which play us the same trick; they nestle away in a corner of our brain; that is the end of them; they are lost; it is impossible to lay the memory on them. Cosette was somewhat vexed at the useless little effort made by her memory. She told herself, that it was very naughty and very wicked of her, to have forgotten the words uttered by Marius.

She sprang out of bed and accomplished the two ablutions of soul and body, her prayers and her toilet.

One may, in a case of exigency, introduce the reader into a nuptial chamber, not into a virginal chamber. Verse would hardly venture it, prose must not.

It is the interior of a flower that is not yet unfolded, it is whiteness in the dark, it is the private cell of a closed *jily*, which must not be gazed upon by man so long as the sun has not gazed upon it. Woman in the bud is sacred. That innocent bud which opens, that adorable half-nudity which is afraid of itself, that white foot which takes refuge in a slipper, that throat which veils itself before a mirror as though a mirror were an eye, that chemise which makes haste to rise up and conceal the shoulder for a creaking bit of furniture or a passing vehicle, those cords tied, those clasps fastened, those laces drawn, those tremors, those shivers of cold and modesty, that exquisite affright in every movement, that almost winged uneasiness where there is no cause for alarm, the successive phases of dressing, as charming as the clouds of dawn, — it is not fitting that all this should be narrated, and it is too much to have even called attention to it.

The eye of man must be more religious in the presence of the rising of a young girl, than in the presence of the rising of a star. The possibility of hurting should inspire an augmentation of respect. The down on the peach, the bloom on the plum, the radiated crystal of the snow, the wing of the butterfly powdered with feathers, are coarse compared to that chastity which does not even know that it is chaste. The young girl is only the flash of a dream, and is not yet a statue. Her bed-chamber is hidden in the sombre part of the ideal. The indiscreet touch of a glance brutalizes this vague penumbra. Here, contemplation is profanation.

We shall, therefore, show nothing of that sweet little flutter of Cosette's rising.

An oriental tale relates how the rose was made white by God, but that Adam looked upon her when she was unfolding, and she was ashamed and turned crimson. We are of the number who fall speechless in the presence of young girls and flowers, since we think them worthy of veneration.

Cosette dressed herself very hastily, combed and dressed her hair, which was a very simple matter in those days, when women did not swell out their curls and bands with cushions and puffs, and did not put crinoline in their locks. Then she opened the window and cast her eyes around her in every direction, hoping to descry some bit of the street, an angle of the house, an edge of pavement, so that she might be able to watch for Marius there. But no view of the outside was to be had. The back court was surrounded by tolerably high walls, and the outlook was only on several gardens. Cosette

pronounced these gardens hideous : for the first time in her life, she found flowers ugly. The smallest scrap of the gutter of the street would have met her wishes better. She decided to gaze at the sky, as though she thought that Marius might come from that quarter.

All at once, she burst into tears. Not that this was fickleness of soul ; but hopes cut in twain by dejection — that was her case. She had a confused consciousness of something horrible. Thoughts were rife in the air, in fact. She told herself that she was not sure of anything, that to withdraw herself from sight was to be lost ; and the idea that Marius could return to her from heaven appeared to her no longer charming but mournful.

Then, as is the nature of these clouds, calm returned to her, and hope and a sort of unconscious smile, which yet indicated trust in God.

Every one in the house was still asleep. A country-like silence reigned. Not a shutter had been opened. The porter's lodge was closed. Toussaint had not risen, and Cosette, naturally, thought that her father was asleep. She must have suffered much, and she must have still been suffering greatly, for she said to herself, that her father had been unkind ; but she counted on Marius. The eclipse of such a light was decidedly impossible. Now and then, she heard sharp shocks in the distance, and she said : " It is odd that people should be opening and shutting their carriage gates so early." They were the reports of the cannon battering the barricade.

A few feet below Cosette's window, in the ancient and perfectly black cornice of the wall, there was a martin's nest ; the curve of this nest formed a little projection beyond the cornice, so that from above it was possible to look into this little paradise. The mother was there, spreading her wings like a fan over her brood ; the father fluttered about, flew away, then came back, bearing in his beak food and kisses. The dawning day gilded this happy thing, the great law, " Multiply," lay there smiling and august, and that sweet mystery unfolded in the glory of the morning. Cosette, with her hair in the sunlight, her soul absorbed in chimæras, illuminated by love within and by the dawn without, bent over mechanically, and almost without daring to avow to herself that she was thinking at the same time of Marius, began to gaze at these birds, at this family, at that male and female, that mother and her little ones, with the profound trouble which a nest produces on a virgin.

XI. — THE SHOT WHICH MISSES NOTHING AND KILLS NO ONE.

THE assailants' fire continued. Musketry and grape-shot alternated, but without committing great ravages, to tell the truth. The top alone of the Corinthe façade suffered; the window on the first floor, and the attic window in the roof, riddled with buck-shot and biscalens, were slowly losing their shape. The combatants who had been posted there had been obliged to withdraw. However, this is according to the tactics of barricades; to fire for a long while, in order to exhaust the insurgents' ammunition, if they commit the mistake of replying. When it is perceived, from the slackening of their fire, that they have no more powder and ball, the assault is made, Enjolras had not fallen into this trap; the barricade did not reply.

At every discharge by platoons, Gavroche puffed out his cheek with his tongue, a sign of supreme disdain.

"Good for you," said he, "rip up the cloth. We want some lint."

Courfeyrac called the grape-shot to order for the little effect which it produced, and said to the cannon:

"You are growing diffuse, my good fellow."

One gets puzzled in battle, as at a ball. It is probable that this silence on the part of the redoubt began to render the besiegers uneasy, and to make them fear some unexpected incident, and that they felt the necessity of getting a clear view behind that heap of paving-stones, and of knowing what was going on behind that impassible wall which received blows without retorting. The insurgents suddenly perceived a helmet glittering in the sun on a neighboring roof. A fireman had placed his back against a tall chimney, and seemed to be acting as sentinel. His glance fell directly down into the barricade.

"There's an embarrassing watcher," said Enjolras.

Jean Valjean had returned Enjolras' rifle, but he had his own gun.

Without saying a word, he took aim at the fireman, and, a second later, the helmet, smashed by a bullet, rattled noisily into the street. The terrified soldier made haste to disappear. A second observer took his place. This one was an officer. Jean Valjean, who had re-loaded his gun, took aim at the newcomer and sent the officer's casque to join the soldier's. The officer did not persist, and retired speedily. This time the

warning was understood. No one made his appearance there after on that roof; and the idea of spying on the barricade was abandoned.

"Why did you not kill the man?" Bossuet asked Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean made no reply.

XII. — DISORDER A PARTISAN OF ORDER.

BOSSUET muttered in Combeferre's ear:

"He did not answer my question."

"He is a man who does good by gun-shots," said Combeferre.

Those who have preserved some memory of this already distant epoch know that the National Guard from the suburbs was valiant against insurrections. It was particularly zealous and intrepid in the days of June, 1832. A certain good dram-shop keeper of Pantin des Vertus or la Cunette, whose "establishment" had been closed by the riots, became leonine at the sight of his deserted dance-hall, and got himself killed to preserve the order represented by a tea-garden. In that bourgeois and heroic time, in the presence of ideas which had their knights, interests had their paladins. The prosiness of the originators detracted nothing from the bravery of the movement. The diminution of a pile of crowns made bankers sing the Marseillaise. They shed their blood lyrically for the counting-house; and they defended the shop, that immense diminutive of the fatherland, with Lacedæmonian enthusiasm.

At bottom, we will observe, there was nothing in all this that was not extremely serious. It was social elements entering into strife, while awaiting the day when they should enter into equilibrium.

Another sign of the times was the anarchy mingled with governmentalism [the barbarous name of the correct party]. People were for order in combination with lack of discipline.

The drum suddenly beat capricious calls, at the command of such or such a Colonel of the National Guard; such and such a captain went into action through inspiration; such and such National Guardsmen fought, "for an idea," and on their own account. At critical moments, on "days" they took counsel less of their leaders than of their instincts. There existed in the army of order, veritable guerilleros, some of the sword, like Fannicot, others of the pen, like Henri Fonfrède.

Civilization, unfortunately represented at this epoch rather by an aggregation of interests than by a group of principles, was or thought itself, in peril; it set up the cry of alarm; each, constituting himself a centre, defended it, succored it, and protected it with his own head; and the first comer took it upon himself to save society.

Zeal sometimes proceeded to extermination. A platoon of the National Guard would constitute itself on its own authority a private council of war, and judge and execute a captured insurgent in five minutes. It was an improvisation of this sort that had slain Jean Prouvaire. Fierce Lynch law, with which no one party has any right to reproach the rest, for it has been applied by the Republic in America, as well as by the monarchy in Europe. This Lynch law was complicated with mistakes. On one day of rioting, a young poet, named Paul Aimé Garnier, was pursued in the Place Royale, with a bayonet at his loins, and only escaped by taking refuge under the porte-cochère of No. 6. They shouted:—"There's another of those Saint-Simonians!" and they wanted to kill him. Now, he had under his arm a volume of the memoirs of the Duc de Saint-Simon. A National Guard had read the words *Saint-Simon* on the book, and had shouted: "Death!"

On the 6th of June, 1832, a company of the National Guards from the suburbs, commanded by the Captain Fannicot, above mentioned, had itself decimated in the Rue de la Chanvrerie out of caprice and its own good pleasure. This fact, singular though it may seem, was proved at the judicial investigation opened in consequence of the insurrection of 1832. Captain Fannicot, a bold and impatient bourgeois, a sort of condottiere of the order of those whom we have just characterized, a fanatical and intractable governmentalist, could not resist the temptation to fire prematurely, and the ambition of capturing the barricade alone and unaided, that is to say, with his company. Exasperated by the successive apparition of the red flag and the old coat which he took for the black flag, he loudly blamed the generals and chiefs of the corps, who were holding council and did not think that the moment for the decisive assault had arrived, and who were allowing "the insurrection to fry in its own fat," to use the celebrated expression of one of them. For his part, he thought the barricade ripe, and as that which is ripe ought to fall, he made the attempt.

He commanded men as resolute as himself, "raging fellows," as a witness said. His company, the same which had

shot Jean Prouvaire the poet, was the first of the battalion posted at the angle of the street. At the moment when they were least expecting it, the captain launched his men against the barricade. This movement, executed with more good will than strategy, cost the Fannicot company dear. Before it had traversed two thirds of the street it was received by a general discharge from the barricade. Four, the most audacious, who were running on in front, were mown down point blank at the very foot of the redoubt, and this courageous throng of National Guards, very brave men but lacking in military tenacity, were forced to fall back, after some hesitation, leaving fifteen corpses on the pavement. This momentary hesitation gave the insurgents time to re-load their weapons, and a second and very destructive discharge struck the company before it could regain the corner of the street, its shelter. A moment more and it was caught between two fires, and it received the volley from the battery piece which, not having received the order, had not discontinued its firing.

The intrepid and imprudent Fannicot was one of the dead from this grape-shot. He was killed by the cannon, that is to say, by order.

This attack, which was more furious than serious, irritated Enjolras. — "The fools!" said he. "They are getting their own men killed and they are using up our ammunition for nothing."

Enjolras spoke like the real general of insurrection which he was. Insurrection and repression do not fight with equal weapons. Insurrection, which is speedily exhausted, has only a certain number of shots to fire and a certain number of combatants to expend. An empty cartridge-box, a man killed, cannot be replaced. As repression has the army, it does not count its men, and, as it has Vincennes, it does not count its shots. Repression has as many regiments as the barricade has men, and as many arsenals as the barricade has cartridge-boxes. Thus they are struggles of one against a hundred, which always end in crushing the barricade; unless the revolution, uprising suddenly, flings into the balance its flaming archangel's sword. This does happen sometimes. Then everything rises, the pavements begin to seethe, popular redoubts abound. Paris quivers supremely, the *quid divinum* is given forth, a 10th of August is in the air, a 29th of July is in the air, a wonderful light appears, the yawning maw of force draws back, and the army, that lion, sees before it, erect and tranquil, that prophet, France.

XIII.—PASSING GLEAMS.

IN the chaos of sentiments and passions which defend a barricade, there is a little of everything; there is bravery, there is youth, honor, enthusiasm, the ideal, conviction, the rage of the gambler, and, above all, intermittences of hope.

One of these intermittences, one of these vague quivers of hope suddenly traversed the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie at the moment when it was least expected.

"Listen," suddenly cried Enjolras, who was still on the watch, "it seems to me that Paris is waking up."

It is certain that, on the morning of the 6th of June, the insurrection broke out afresh for an hour or two, to a certain extent. The obstinacy of the alarm peal of Saint-Merry reanimated some fancies. Barricades were begun in the Rue du Poirier and the Rue des Gravilliers. In front of the Porte Saint-Martin, a young man, armed with a rifle, attacked alone a squadron of cavalry. In plain sight, on the open boulevard, he placed one knee on the ground, shouldered his weapon, fired, killed the commander of the squadron, and turned away, saying: "There's another who will do us no more harm."

He was put to the sword. In the Rue Saint-Denis, a woman fired on the National Guard from behind a lowered blind. The slats of the blind could be seen to tremble at every shot. A child fourteen years of age was arrested in the Rue de la Cossonerie, with his pockets full of cartridges. Many posts were attacked. At the entrance to the Rue Bertin-Poirée, a very lively and utterly unexpected fusillade welcomed a regiment of cuirassiers, at whose head marched Marshal General Cavaignac de Barague. In the Rue Planché-Mibray, they threw old pieces of pottery and household utensils down on the soldiers from the roofs; a bad sign; and when this matter was reported to Marshal Soult, Napoleon's old lieutenant grew thoughtful, as he recalled Suchet's saying at Saragossa: "We are lost when the old women empty their pots de chambre on our heads."

These general symptoms which presented themselves at the moment when it was thought that the uprising had been rendered local, this fever of wrath, these sparks which flew hither and thither above those deep masses of combustibles which are called the faubourgs of Paris,—all this, taken together, disturbed the military chiefs. They made haste to stamp out these beginnings of conflagration.

They delayed the attack on the barricades Maubuée, de la Chanvrerie and Saint-Merry until these sparks had been extinguished, in order that they might have to deal with the barricades only and be able to finish them at one blow. Columns were thrown into the streets where there was fermentation, sweeping the large, sounding the small, right and left, now slowly and cautiously, now at full charge. The troops broke in the doors of houses whence shots had been fired; at the same time, manœuvres by the cavalry dispersed the groups on the boulevards. This repression was not effected without some commotion, and without that tumultuous uproar peculiar to collisions between the army and the people. This was what Enjolras had caught in the intervals of the cannonade and the musketry. Moreover, he had seen wounded men passing the end of the street in litters, and he said to Courfeyrac: — “Those wounded do not come from us.”

Their hope did not last long; the gleam was quickly eclipsed. In less than half an hour, what was in the air vanished, it was a flash of lightning unaccompanied by thunder, and the insurgents felt that sort of leaden cope, which the indifference of the people casts over obstinate and deserted men, fall over them once more.

The general movement, which seemed to have assumed a vague outline, had miscarried; and the attention of the minister of war and the strategy of the generals could now be concentrated on the three or four barricades which still remained standing.

The sun was mounting above the horizon.

An insurgent hailed Enjolras.

“We are hungry here. Are we really going to die like this, without anything to eat?”

Enjolras, who was still leaning on his elbows at his embrasure, made an affirmative sign with his head, but without taking his eyes from the end of the street.

XIV. — WHEREIN WILL APPEAR THE NAME OF ENJOLRAS' MISTRESS.

COURFEYRAC, seated on a paving-stone beside Enjolras, continued to insult the cannon, and each time that that gloomy cloud of projectiles which is called grape-shot passed overhead with its terrible sound he assailed it with a burst of irony.

“You are wearing out your lungs, poor, brutal, old fellow,

you pain me, you are wasting your row. That's not thunder, it's a cough."

And the bystanders laughed.

Courfeyrac and Bossuet, whose brave good humor increased with the peril, like Madame Scarron, replaced nourishment with pleasantries, and, as wine was lacking, they poured out gayety to all.

"I admire Enjolras," said Bossuet. "His impassive temerity astounds me. He lives alone, which renders him a little sad, perhaps; Enjolras complains of his greatness, which binds him to widowhood. The rest of us have mistresses, more or less, who make us crazy, that is to say, brave. When a man is as much in love as a tiger, the least that he can do is to fight like a lion. That is one way of taking our revenge for the capers that mesdames our grisettes play on us. Roland gets himself killed for Angélique; all our heroism comes from our women. A man without a woman is a pistol without a trigger; it is the woman that sets the man off. Well, Enjolras has no woman. He is not in love, and yet he manages to be intrepid. It is a thing unheard of that a man should be as cold as ice and as bold as fire."

Enjolras did not appear to be listening, but had any one been near him, that person would have heard him mutter in a low voice: "*Patria*."

Bossuet was still laughing when Courfeyrac exclaimed: "News!"

And assuming the tone of an usher making an announcement, he added:

"My name is Eight-Pounder."

In fact, a new personage had entered on the scene. This was a second piece of ordnance.

The artillery-men rapidly performed their manœuvres in force, and placed this second piece in line with the first.

This outlined the catastrophe.

A few minutes later, the two pieces, rapidly served, were firing point-blank at the redoubt; the platoon firing of the line and of the soldiers from the suburbs sustained the artillery.

Another cannonade was audible at some distance. At the same time that the two guns were furiously attacking the redoubt from the Rue de la Chanvrerie, two other cannons, trained one from the Rue Saint-Denis, the other from the Rue Aubry-le-Boucher, were riddling the Saint-Merry barricade. The four cannons echoed each other mournfully.

The barking of these sombre dogs of war replied to each other.

One of the two pieces which was now battering the barricade on the Rue de la Chanvrerie was firing grape-shot, the other balls.

The piece which was firing balls was pointed a little high, and the aim was calculated so that the ball struck the extreme edge of the upper crest of the barricade, and crumbled the stone down upon the insurgents, mingled with bursts of grape-shot.

The object of this mode of firing was to drive the insurgents from the summit of the redoubt, and to compel them to gather close in the interior, that is to say, this announced the assault.

The combatants once driven from the crest of the barricade by balls, and from the windows of the cabaret by grape-shot, the attacking columns could venture into the street without being picked off, perhaps, even, without being seen, could briskly and suddenly scale the redoubt, as on the preceding evening, and, who knows? take it by surprise.

"It is absolutely necessary that the inconvenience of those guns should be diminished," said Enjolras, and he shouted: "Fire on the artillery-men!"

All were ready. The barricade, which had long been silent, poured forth a desperate fire; seven or eight discharges followed, with a sort of rage and joy; the street was filled with blinding smoke, and, at the end of a few minutes, athwart this mist all streaked with flame, two thirds of the gunners could be distinguished lying beneath the wheels of the cannons. Those who were left standing continued to serve the pieces with severe tranquillity, but the fire had slackened.

"Things are going well now," said Bossuet to Enjolras. "Success."

Enjolras shook his head and replied:

"Another quarter of an hour of this success, and there will not be any cartridges left in the barricade."

It appears that Gavroche overheard this remark.

XV. — GAVROCHE OUTSIDE.

COURFEYRAC suddenly caught sight of some one at the base of the barricade, outside in the street, amid the bullets.

Gavroche had taken a bottle basket from the wine-shop, had made his way out through the cut, and was quietly en

gaged in emptying the full cartridge-boxes of the National Guardsmen who had been killed on the slope of the redoubt, into his basket.

"What are you doing there?" asked Courfeyrac.

Gavroche raised his face:—

"I'm filling my basket, citizen."

"Don't you see the grape-shot?"

Gavroche replied:

"Well, it is raining. What then?"

Courfeyrac shouted:—"Come in!"

"Instanter," said Gavroche.

And with a single bound he plunged into the street.

It will be remembered that Fannicot's company had left behind it a trail of bodies. Twenty corpses lay scattered here and there on the pavement, through the whole length of the street. Twenty cartouches for Gavroche meant a provision of cartridges for the barricade.

The smoke in the street was like a fog. Whoever has beheld a cloud which has fallen into a mountain gorge between two peaked escarpments can imagine this smoke rendered denser and thicker by two gloomy rows of lofty houses. It rose gradually and was incessantly renewed; hence a twilight which made even the broad daylight turn pale. The combatants could hardly see each other from one end of the street to the other, short as it was.

This obscurity, which had probably been desired and calculated on by the commanders who were to direct the assault on the barricade, was useful to Gavroche.

Beneath the folds of this veil of smoke, and thanks to his small size, he could advance tolerably far into the street without being seen. He rifled the first seven or eight cartridge-boxes without much danger.

He crawled flat on his belly, galloped on all fours, took his basket in his teeth, twisted, glided, undulated, wound from one dead body to another, and emptied the cartridge-box or cartouche as a monkey opens a nut.

They did not dare to shout to him to return from the barricade, which was quite near, for fear of attracting attention to him.

On one body, that of a corporal, he found a powder-flask.

"For thirst," said he, putting it in his pocket.

By dint of advancing, he reached a point where the fog of the fusillade became transparent. So that the sharpshooters of the line ranged on the outlook behind their paving-stone

dike and the sharpshooters of the banlieue massed at the corner of the street suddenly pointed out to each other something moving through the smoke.

At the moment when Gavroche was relieving a sergeant, who was lying near a stone door-post, of his cartridges, a bullet struck the body.

"Fichtre!" ejaculated Gavroche. "They are killing my dead men for me."

A second bullet struck a spark from the pavement beside him. — A third overturned his basket.

Gavroche looked and saw that this came from the men of the banlieue.

He sprang to his feet, stood erect, with his hair flying in the wind, his hands on his hips, his eyes fixed on the National Guardsmen who were firing, and sang:

"On est laid à Nanterre,
C'est la faute à Voltaire;
Et bête à Palaiseau,
C'est la faute à Rousseau."

"Men are ugly at Nanterre,
'Tis the fault of Voltaire;
And dull at Palaiseau,
'Tis the fault of Rousseau."

Then he picked up his basket, replaced the cartridges which had fallen from it, without missing a single one, and, advancing towards the fusillade, set about plundering another cartridge-box. There a fourth bullet missed him, again. Gavroche sang:

"Je ne suis pas notaire,
C'est la faute à Voltaire;
Je suis un petit oiseau,
C'est la faute à Rousseau."

"I am not a notary,
'Tis the fault of Voltaire;
I'm a little bird,
'Tis the fault of Rousseau."

A fifth bullet only succeeded in drawing from him a third couplet:

"Joie est mon caractère,
C'est la faute à Voltaire;
Misère est mon trousseau,
C'est la faute à Rousseau."

"Joy is my character,
'Tis the fault of Voltaire;
Misery is my trousseau,
'Tis the fault of Rousseau."

Thus it went on for some time.

It was a charming and terrible sight. Gavroche, though shot at, was teasing the fusillade. He had the air of being greatly diverted. It was the sparrow pecking at the sportsmen. To each discharge he retorted with a couplet. They aimed at him constantly, and always missed him. The National Guardsmen and the soldiers laughed as they took aim at him. He lay down, sprang to his feet, hid in the corner

of a doorway, then made a bound, disappeared, re-appeared, scampered away, returned, replied to the grape-shot with his thumb at his nose, and, all the while, went on pillaging the cartouches, emptying the cartridge-boxes, and filling his basket. The insurgents, panting with anxiety, followed him with their eyes. The barricade trembled; he sang. He was not a child, he was not a man; he was a strange gamin-fairy. He might have been called the invulnerable dwarf of the fray. The bullets flew after him, he was more nimble than they. He played a fearful game of hide and seek with death; every time that the flat-nosed face of the spectre approached, the urchin administered to it a fillip.

One bullet, however, better aimed or more treacherous than the rest, finally struck the will-o'-the-wisp of a child. Gavroche was seen to stagger, then he sank to the earth. The whole barricade gave vent to a cry; but there was something of Antæus in that pygmy; for the gamin to touch the pavement is the same as for the giant to touch the earth; Gavroche had fallen only to rise again; he remained in a sitting posture, a long thread of blood streaked his face, he raised both arms in the air, glanced in the direction whence the shot had come, and began to sing:

“Je suis tombé par terre,
C'est la faute à Voltaire;
Le nez dans le ruisseau,
C'est la faute à . . . ”

“I have fallen to the earth,
'Tis the fault of Voltaire;
With my nose in the gutter,
'Tis the fault of . . . ”

He did not finish. A second bullet from the same marksman stopped him short. This time he fell face downward on the pavement, and moved no more. This grand little soul had taken its flight.

XVI. — HOW FROM A BROTHER ONE BECOMES A FATHER.

At that same moment, in the garden of the Luxembourg, — for the gaze of the drama must be everywhere present, — two children were holding each other by the hand. One might have been seven years old, the other five. The rain having soaked them, they were walking along the paths on the sunny side; the elder was leading the younger; they were pale and ragged; they had the air of wild birds. The smaller of them said: “I am very hungry.”

The elder, who was already somewhat of a protector, was

leading his brother with his left hand and in his right he carried a small stick.

They were alone in the garden. The garden was deserted, the gates had been closed by order of the police, on account of the insurrection. The troops who had been bivouacking there had departed for the exigencies of combat.

How did those children come there? Perhaps they had escaped from some guard-house which stood ajar; perhaps there was in the vicinity, at the Barrière d'Enfer, or on the Esplanade de l'Observatoire, or in the neighboring carrefour, dominated by the pediment on which could be read: *In-venerunt parvulum pannis involutum*, some mountebank's booth from which they had fled; perhaps they had, on the preceding evening, escaped the eye of the inspectors of the garden at the hour of closing, and had passed the night in some one of those sentry-boxes where people read the papers? The fact is, they were stray lambs and they seemed free. To be astray and to seem free is to be lost. These poor little creatures were, in fact, lost.

These two children were the same over whom Gavroche had been put to some trouble, as the reader will recollect. Children of the Thénardiens, leased out to Magnon, attributed to M. Gillenormand, and now leaves fallen from all these rootless branches, and swept over the ground by the wind. Their clothing, which had been clean in Magnon's day, and which had served her as a prospectus with M. Gillenormand, had been converted into rags.

Henceforth these beings belonged to the statistics as "Abandoned children," whom the police take note of, collect, mislay and find again on the pavements of Paris.

It required the disturbance of a day like that to account for these miserable little creatures being in that garden. If the superintendents had caught sight of them, they would have driven such rags forth. Poor little things do not enter public gardens; still, people should reflect that, as children, they have a right to flowers.

These children were there, thanks to the locked gates. They were there contrary to the regulations. They had slipped into the garden and there they remained. Closed gates do not dismiss the inspectors, oversight is supposed to continue, but it grows slack and reposes; and the inspectors, moved by the public anxiety and more occupied with the outside than the inside, no longer glanced into the garden, and had not seen the two delinquents.

It had rained the night before, and even a little in the morning. But in June, showers do not count for much. An hour after a storm, it can hardly be seen that the beautiful blonde day has wept. The earth, in summer, is as quickly dried as the cheek of a child. At that period of the solstice, the light of full noonday is, so to speak, poignant. It takes everything. It applies itself to the earth, and superposes itself with a sort of suction. One would say that the sun was thirsty. A shower is but a glass of water; a rainstorm is instantly drunk up. In the morning everything was dripping, in the afternoon everything is powdered over.

Nothing is so worthy of admiration as foliage washed by the rain and wiped by the rays of sunlight; it is warm freshness. The gardens and meadows, having water at their roots, and sun in their flowers, become perfuming-pans of incense, and smoke with all their odors at once. Everything smiles, sings and offers itself. One feels gently intoxicated. The springtime is a provisional paradise, the sun helps man to have patience.

There are beings who demand nothing further; mortals, who, having the azure of heaven, say: "It is enough!" dreamers absorbed in the wonderful, dipping into the idolatry of nature, indifferent to good and evil, contemplators of cosmos and radiantly forgetful of man, who do not understand how people can occupy themselves with the hunger of these, and the thirst of those, with the nudity of the poor in winter, with the lymphatic curvature of the little spinal column, with the pallet, the attic, the dungeon, and the rags of shivering young girls, when they can dream beneath the trees; peaceful and terrible spirits they, and pitilessly satisfied. Strange to say, the infinite suffices them. That great need of man, the finite, which admits of embrace, they ignore. The finite which admits of progress, and sublime toil, they do not think about. The indefinite, which is born from the human and divine combination of the infinite and the finite, escapes them. Provided that they are face to face with immensity, they smile. Joy never, ecstasy forever. Their life lies in surrendering their personality in contemplation. The history of humanity is for them only a detailed plan. All is not there; the true All remains without; what is the use of busying oneself over that detail, man? Man suffers, that is quite possible; but look at Aldebaran rising! The mother has no more milk, the newborn babe is dying. I know nothing about that, but just look at this wonderful rosette which a slice of wood-cells of the

pine presents under the microscope ! Compare the most beautiful Mechlin lace to that if you can ! These thinkers forget to love. The zodiac thrives with them to such a point that it prevents their seeing the weeping child. God eclipses their souls. This is a family of minds which are, at once, great and petty. Horace was one of them, so was Goethe. La Fontaine perhaps ; magnificent egoists of the infinite, tranquil spectators of sorrow, who do not behold Nero if the weather be fair, for whom the sun conceals the funeral pile, who would look on at an execution by the guillotine in the search for an effect of light, who hear neither the cry nor the sob, nor the death rattle, nor the alarm peal, for whom everything is well, since there is a month of May, who, so long as there are clouds of purple and gold above their heads, declare themselves content, and who are determined to be happy until the radiance of the stars and the songs of the birds are exhausted.

These are dark radiances. They have no suspicion that they are to be pitied. Certainly they are so. He who does not weep does not see. They are to be admired and pitied, as one would both pity and admire a being at once night and day, without eyes beneath his lashes but with a star on his brow.

The indifference of these thinkers, is, according to some, a superior philosophy. That may be ; but in this superiority there is some infirmity. One may be immortal and yet limp : witness Vulcan. One may be more than man and less than man. There is incomplete immensity in nature. Who knows whether the sun is not a blind man ?

But then, what ? In whom can we trust ? *Solem quis dicere falsum audeat ?* Who shall dare to say that the sun is false ? Thus certain geniuses, themselves, certain Very-Lofty mortals, man-stars, may be mistaken ? That which is on high at the summit, at the crest, at the zenith, that which sends down so much light on the earth, sees but little, sees badly, sees not at all ? Is not this a desperate state of things ? No. But what is there, then, above the sun ? The god.

On the 6th of June, 1832, about eleven o'clock in the morning, the Luxembourg, solitary and depopulated, was charming. The quincunxes and flower-beds shed forth balm and dazzling beauty into the sunlight. The branches, wild with the brilliant glow of midday, seemed endeavoring to embrace. In the sycamores there was an uproar of linnets, sparrows triumphed, wood-peckers climbed along the chestnut trees, administering little pecks on the bark. The flower-beds accepted the legitimate royalty of the lilies ; the most august of per-

fumes is that which emanates from whiteness. The peppery odor of the carnations was perceptible. The old crows of Marie de Medici were amorous in the tall trees. The sun gilded, empurpled, set fire to and lighted up the tulips, which are nothing but all the varieties of flame made into flowers. All around the banks of tulips the bees, the sparks of these flame-flowers, hummed. All was grace and gayety, even the impending rain; this relapse, by which the lilies of the valley and the honeysuckles were destined to profit, had nothing disturbing about it; the swallows indulged in the charming threat of flying low. He who was there aspired to happiness; life smelled good; all nature exhaled candor, help, assistance, paternity, caress, dawn. The thoughts which fell from heaven were as sweet as the tiny hand of a baby when one kisses it.

The statues under the trees, white and nude, had robes of shadow pierced with light; these goddesses were all tattered with sunlight; rays hung from them on all sides. Around the great fountain, the earth was already dried up to the point of being burnt. There was sufficient breeze to raise little insurrections of dust here and there. A few yellow leaves, left over from the autumn, chased each other merrily, and seemed to be playing tricks on each other.

This abundance of light had something indescribably reassuring about it. Life, sap, heat, odors overflowed; one was conscious, beneath creation, of the enormous size of the source; in all these breaths permeated with love, in this interchange of reverberations and reflections, in this marvellous expenditure of rays, in this infinite outpouring of liquid gold, one felt the prodigality of the inexhaustible; and, behind this splendor as behind a curtain of flame, one caught a glimpse of God, that millionaire of stars.

Thanks to the sand, there was not a speck of mud; thanks to the rain, there was not a grain of ashes. The clumps of blossoms had just been bathed; every sort of velvet, satin, gold and varnish, which springs from the earth in the form of flowers, was irreproachable. This magnificence was cleanly. The grand silence of happy nature filled the garden. A celestial silence that is compatible with a thousand sorts of music, the cooing of nests, the buzzing of swarms, the flutterings of the breeze. All the harmony of the season was complete in one gracious whole; the entrances and exits of spring took place in proper order; the lilacs ended; the jasmines began; some flowers were tardy, some insects in advance of their time; the van-guard of the red June butterflies fraternized with the

rear-guard of the white butterflies of May. The plantain trees were getting their new skins. The breeze hollowed out undulations in the magnificent enormity of the chestnut-trees. It was splendid. A veteran from the neighboring barracks, who was gazing through the fence, said: "Here is the Spring presenting arms, and in full uniform."

All nature was breakfasting; creation was at table; this was its hour; the great blue cloth was spread in the sky, and the great green cloth on earth; the sun lighted it all up brilliantly. God was serving the universal repast. Each creature had his pasture or his mess. The ring-dove found his hemp-seed, the chaffinch found his millet, the goldfinch found chickweed, the red-breast found worms, the green finch found flies, the fly found infusoriæ, the bee found flowers. They ate each other somewhat, it is true, which is the misery of evil mixed with good; but not a beast of them all had an empty stomach.

The two little abandoned creatures had arrived in the vicinity of the grand fountain, and, rather bewildered by all this light, they tried to hide themselves, the instinct of the poor and the weak in the presence of even impersonal magnificence; and they kept behind the swans' hutch.

Here and there, at intervals, when the wind blew, shouts, clamor, a sort of tumultuous death rattle, which was the firing, and dull blows, which were discharges of cannon, struck the ear confusedly. Smoke hung over the roofs in the direction of the Halles. A bell, which had the air of an appeal, was ringing in the distance.

These children did not appear to notice these noises. The little one repeated from time to time: "I am hungry."

Almost at the same instant with the children, another couple approached the great basin. They consisted of a good-man, about fifty years of age, who was leading by the hand a little fellow of six. No doubt, a father and his son. The little man of six had a big brioche.

At that epoch, certain houses abutting on the river, in the Rues Madame and d'Enfer, had keys to the Luxembourg garden, of which the lodgers enjoyed the use when the gates were shut, a privilege which was suppressed later on. This father and son came from one of these houses, no doubt.

The two poor little creatures watched "that gentleman" approaching, and hid themselves a little more thoroughly.

He was a bourgeois. The same person, perhaps, whom Marius had one day heard, through his love fever, near the same grand basin, counselling his son "to avoid excesses." He had

an affable and haughty air, and a mouth which was always smiling, since it did not shut. This mechanical smile, produced by too much jaw and too little skin, shows the teeth rather than the soul. The child, with his brioche, which he had bitten into but had not finished eating, seemed satiated. The child was dressed as a National Guardsman, owing to the insurrection, and the father had remained clad as a bourgeois out of prudence.

Father and son halted near the fountain where two swans were sporting. This bourgeois appeared to cherish a special admiration for the swans. He resembled them in this sense, that he walked like them.

For the moment, the swans were swimming, which is their principal talent, and they were superb.

If the two poor little beings had listened and if they had been of an age to understand, they might have gathered the words of this grave man. The father was saying to his son :

"The sage lives content with little. Look at me, my son. I do not love pomp. I am never seen in clothes decked with gold lace and stones ; I leave that false splendor to badly organized souls."

Here the deep shouts which proceeded from the direction of the Halles burst out with fresh force of bell and uproar.

"What is that ? " inquired the child.

The father replied :

"It is the Saturnalia."

All at once, he caught sight of the two little ragged boys behind the green swan-hutch.

"There is the beginning," said he.

And, after a pause, he added :

"Anarchy is entering this garden."

In the meanwhile, his son took a bite of his brioche, spit it out, and suddenly burst out crying.

"What are you crying about ? " demanded his father.

"I am not hungry any more," said the child.

The father's smile became more accentuated.

"One does not need to be hungry in order to eat a cake."

"My cake tires me. It is stale."

"Don't you want any more of it ? "

"No."

The father pointed to the swans.

"Throw it to those palmipeds."

The child hesitated. A person may not want any more of his cake ; but that is no reason for giving it away.

The father went on :

"Be humane. You must have compassion on animals."

And, taking the cake from his son, he flung it into the basin.

The cake fell very near the edge.

The swans were far away, in the centre of the basin, and busy with some prey. They had seen neither the bourgeois nor the brioche.

The bourgeois, feeling that the cake was in danger of being wasted, and moved by this useless shipwreck, entered upon a telegraphic agitation, which finally attracted the attention of the swans.

They perceived something floating, steered for the edge like ships, as they are, and slowly directed their course toward the brioche, with the stupid majesty which befits white creatures.

"The swans [*cygnes*] understand signs [*signes*]," said the bourgeois, delighted to make a jest.

At that moment, the distant tumult of the city underwent another sudden increase. This time it was sinister. There are some gusts of wind which speak more distinctly than others. The one which was blowing at that moment brought clearly defined drum-beats, clamors, platoon firing, and the dismal replies of the tocsin and the cannon. This coincided with a black cloud which suddenly veiled the sun.

The swans had not yet reached the brioche.

"Let us return home," said the father, "they are attacking the Tuileries."

He grasped his son's hand again. Then he continued :

"From the Tuileries to the Luxembourg, there is but the distance which separates Royalty from the peerage ; that is not far. Shots will soon rain down."

He glanced at the cloud.

"Perhaps it is rain itself that is about to shower down ; the sky is joining in ; the younger branch is condemned. Let us return home quickly."

"I should like to see the swans eat the brioche," said the child.

The father replied :

"That would be imprudent."

And he led his little bourgeois away.

The son, regretting the swans, turned his head back toward the basin until a corner of the quincunxes concealed it from him.

In the meanwhile, the two little waifs had approached the

brioche at the same time as the swans. It was floating on the water. The smaller of them stared at the cake, the elder gazed after the retreating bourgeois.

Father and son entered the labyrinth of walks which leads to the grand flight of steps near the clump of trees on the side of the Rue Madame.

As soon as they had disappeared from view, the elder child hastily flung himself flat on his stomach on the rounding curb of the basin, and clinging to it with his left hand, and leaning over the water, on the verge of falling in, he stretched out his right hand with his stick towards the cake. The swans, perceiving the enemy, made haste, and in so doing, they produced an effect of their breasts which was of service to the little fisher; the water flowed back before the swans, and one of these gentle concentric undulations softly floated the brioche towards the child's wand. Just as the swans came up, the stick touched the cake. The child gave a brisk rap, drew in the brioche, frightened away the swans, seized the cake, and sprang to his feet. The cake was wet; but they were hungry and thirsty. The elder broke the cake into two portions, a large one and a small one, took the small one for himself, gave the large one to his brother, and said to him:

"Ram that into your muzzle."

XVII. — MORTUUS PATER FILIUM MORITURUM EXPECTAT.

MARIUS dashed out of the barricade, Combeferre followed him. But he was too late. Gavroche was dead. Combeferre brought back the basket of cartridges; Marius bore the child.

"Alas!" he thought, "that which the father had done for his father, he was requiting to the son; only, Thévardier had brought back his father alive; he was bringing back the child dead."

When Marius re-entered the redoubt with Gavroche in his arms, his face, like the child, was inundated with blood.

At the moment when he had stooped to lift Gavroche, a bullet had grazed his head; he had not noticed it.

Courfeyrac untied his cravat and with it bandaged Marius' brow.

They laid Gavroche on the same table with Mabeuf, and spread over the two corpses the black shawl. There was enough of it for both the old man and the child.

Combeferre distributed the cartridges from the basket which he had brought in.

This gave each man fifteen rounds to fire.

Jean Valjean was still in the same place, motionless on his stone post. When Combeferre offered him his fifteen cartridges, he shook his head.

"Here's a rare eccentric," said Combeferre in a low voice to Enjolras. "He finds a way of not fighting in this barricade."

"Which does not prevent him from defending it," responded Enjolras.

"Heroism has its originals," resumed Combeferre.

And Courfeyrac, who had overheard, added :

"He's another sort from Father Mabeuf."

One thing which must be noted is, that the fire which was battering the barricade hardly disturbed the interior. Those who have never traversed the whirlwind of this sort of war can form no idea of the singular moments of tranquillity mingled with these convulsions. Men go and come, they talk, they jest, they lounge. Some one whom we know heard a combatant say to him in the midst of the grape-shot : "We are here as at a bachelor breakfast." The redoubt of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, we repeat, seemed very calm within. All mutations and all phases had been, or were about to be, exhausted. The position, from critical, had become menacing, and, from menacing, was probably about to become desperate. In proportion as the situation grew gloomy, the glow of heroism empurpled the barricade more and more. Enjolras, who was grave, dominated it, in the attitude of a young Spartan sacrificing his naked sword to the sombre genius, Epidotas.

Combeferre, wearing an apron, was dressing the wounds ; Bossuet and Feuilly were making cartridges with the powder-flask picked up by Gavroche on the dead corporal, and Bossuet said to Feuilly : "We are soon to take the diligence for another planet" ; Courfeyrac was disposing and arranging on some paving-stones which he had reserved for himself near Enjolras, a complete arsenal, his sword-cane, his gun, two holster pistols, and a cudgel, with the care of a young girl setting a small dunkerque in order. Jean Valjean stared silently at the wall opposite him. An artisan was fastening Mother Hucheloup's big straw hat on his head with a string, "for fear of sun-stroke," as he said. The young men from the Cougourde d'Aix were chatting merrily among themselves, as though eager to speak patois for the

last time. Joly, who had taken Widow Hucheloup's mirror from the wall, was examining his tongue in it. Some combatants, having discovered a few crusts of rather mouldy bread, in a drawer, were eagerly devouring them. Marius was disturbed with regard to what his father was about to say to him.

XVIII. — THE VULTURE BECOME PREY.

WE must insist upon one psychological fact peculiar to barricades. Nothing which is characteristic of that surprising war of the streets should be omitted.

Whatever may have been the singular inward tranquillity which we have just mentioned, the barricade, for those who are inside it, remains, none the less, a vision.

There is something of the apocalypse in civil war, all the mists of the unknown are commingled with fierce flashes, revolutions are sphinxes, and any one who has passed through a barricade thinks he has traversed a dream.

The feelings to which one is subject in these places we have pointed out in the case of Marius, and we shall see the consequences; they are both more and less than life. On emerging from a barricade, one no longer knows what one has seen there. One has been terrible, but one knows it not. One has been surrounded with conflicting ideas which had human faces; one's head has been in the light of the future. There were corpses lying prone there, and phantoms standing erect. The hours were colossal and seemed hours of eternity. One has lived in death. Shadows have passed by. What were they?

One has beheld hands on which there was blood; there was a deafening horror; there was also a frightful silence; there were open mouths which shouted, and other open mouths which held their peace; one was in the midst of smoke, of night, perhaps. One fancied that one had touched the sinister ooze of unknown depths; one stares at something red on one's finger nails. One no longer remembers anything.

Let us return to the Rue de la Chanvrerie.

All at once, between two discharges, the distant sound of a clock striking the hour became audible.

"It is midday," said Combeferre.

The twelve strokes had not finished striking when Enjolras sprang to his feet, and from the summit of the barricade hurled this thundering shout:

"Carry stones up into the houses; line the window-sills and the roofs with them. Half the men to their guns, the other half to the paving-stones. There is not a minute to be lost."

A squad of sappers and miners, axe on shoulder, had just made their appearance in battle array at the end of the street.

This could only be the head of a column; and of what column? The attacking column, evidently; the sappers charged with the demolition of the barricade must always precede the soldiers who are to scale it.

They were, evidently, on the brink of that moment which M. Clermont-Tonnerre, in 1822, called "the tug of war."

Enjolras' order was executed with the correct haste which is peculiar to ships and barricades, the only two scenes of combat where escape is impossible. In less than a minute, two thirds of the stones which Enjolras had had piled up at the door of Corinthe had been carried up to the first floor and the attic, and before a second minute had elapsed, these stones, artistically set one upon the other, walled up the sash-window on the first floor and the windows in the roof to half their height. A few loop-holes carefully planned by Feuilly, the principal architect, allowed of the passage of the gun-barrels. This armament of the windows could be effected all the more easily since the firing of grape-shot had ceased. The two cannons were now discharging ball against the centre of the barrier in order to make a hole there, and, if possible, a breach for the assault.

When the stones destined to the final defence were in place, Enjolras had the bottles which he had set under the table where Mabeuf lay, carried to the first floor.

"Who is to drink that?" Bossuet asked him.

"They," replied Enjolras.

Then they barricaded the window below, and held in readiness the iron cross-bars which served to secure the door of the wine-shop at night.

The fortress was complete. The barricade was the rampart, the wine-shop was the dungeon. With the stones which remained they stopped up the outlet.

As the defenders of a barricade are always obliged to be sparing of their ammunition, and as the assailants know this, the assailants combine their arrangements with a sort of irritating leisure, expose themselves to fire prematurely,

though in appearance more than in reality, and take their ease. The preparations for attack are always made with a certain methodical deliberation; after which, the lightning strikes.

This deliberation permitted Enjolras to take a review of everything and to perfect everything. He felt that, since such men were to die, their death ought to be a masterpiece.

He said to Marius: — "We are the two leaders. I will give the last orders inside. Do you remain outside and observe."

Marius posted himself on the lookout upon the crest of the barricade.

Enjolras had the door of the kitchen, which was the ambulance, as the reader will remember, nailed up.

"No splashing of the wounded," he said.

He issued his final orders in the tap-room in a curt, but profoundly tranquil tone; Feuilly listened and replied in the name of all.

"On the first floor, hold your axes in readiness to cut the staircase. Have you them?"

"Yes," said Feuilly.

"How many?"

"Two axes and a pole-axe."

"That is good. There are now twenty-six combatants of us on foot. How many guns are there?"

"Thirty-four."

"Eight too many. Keep those eight guns loaded like the rest and at hand. Swords and pistols in your belts. Twenty men to the barricade. Six ambushed in the attic windows, and at the window on the first floor to fire on the assailants through the loop-holes in the stones. Let not a single worker remain inactive here. Presently, when the drum beats the assault, let the twenty below stairs rush to the barricade.

The first to arrive will have the best places."

These arrangements made, he turned to Javert and said:

"I am not forgetting you."

And, laying a pistol on the table, he added:

"The last man to leave this room will smash the skull of this spy."

"Here?" inquired a voice.

"No, let us not mix their corpse with our own. The little barricade of the Mondétour lane can be scaled. It is only four feet high. The man is well pinioned. He shall be taken thither and put to death."

There was some one who was more impassive at that

moment than Enjolras, it was Javert. Here Jean Valjean made his appearance.

He had been lost among the group of insurgents. He stepped forth and said to Enjolras:

"You are the commander?"

"Yes."

"You thanked me a while ago."

"In the name of the Republic. The barricade has two saviors, Marius Pontmercy and yourself."

"Do you think that I deserve a recompense?"

"Certainly."

"Well, I request one."

"What is it?"

"That I may blow that man's brains out."

Javert raised his head, saw Jean Valjean, made an almost imperceptible movement, and said:

"That is just."

As for Enjolras, he had begun to re-load his rifle; he cast his eyes about him:

"No objections."

And he turned to Jean Valjean:

"Take the spy."

Jean Valjean did, in fact, take possession of Javert, by seating himself on the end of the table. He seized the pistol, and a faint click announced that he had cocked it.

Almost at the same moment, a blast of trumpets became audible.

"Take care!" shouted Marius from the top of the barricade.

Javert began to laugh with that noiseless laugh which was peculiar to him, and gazing intently at the insurgents, he said to them:

"You are in no better case than I am."

"All out!" shouted Enjolras.

The insurgents poured out tumultuously, and, as they went, received in the back, — may we be permitted the expression, — this sally of Javert's.

"We shall meet again shortly!"

XIX. — JEAN VALJEAN TAKES HIS REVENGE.

WHEN Jean Valjean was left alone with Javert, he untied the rope which fastened the prisoner across the middle of the body, and the knot of which was under the table. After this he made him a sign to rise.

Javert obeyed with that indefinable smile in which the supremacy of enchained authority is condensed.

Jean Valjean took Javert by the martingale, as one would take a beast of burden by the breast-band, and, dragging the latter after him, emerged from the wine-shop slowly, because Javert, with his impeded limbs, could take only very short steps.

Jean Valjean had the pistol in his hand.

In this manner they crossed the inner trapezium of the barricade. The insurgents, all intent on the attack, which was imminent, had their backs turned to these two.

Marius alone, stationed on one side, at the extreme left of the barricade, saw them pass. This group of victim and executioner was illuminated by the sepulchral light which he bore in his own soul.

Jean Valjean with some difficulty, but without relaxing his hold for a single instant, made Javert, pinioned as he was, scale the little entrenchment in the Mondétour lane.

When they had crossed this barrier, they found themselves alone in the lane. No one saw them. Among the heap they could distinguish a livid face, streaming hair, a pierced hand and the half nude breast of a woman. It was Éponine. The corner of the houses hid them from the insurgents. The corpses carried away from the barricade formed a terrible pile a few paces distant.

Javert gazed askance at this body, and, profoundly calm, said in a low tone:

"It strikes me that I know that girl."

Then he turned to Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean thrust the pistol under his arm and fixed on Javert a look which it required no words to interpret: "Javert, it is I."

Javert replied.

"Take your revenge."

Jean Valjean drew from his pocket a knife, and opened it.

"A clasp-knife!" exclaimed Javert, "you are right. That suits you better."

Jean Valjean cut the martingale which Javert had about his neck, then he cut the cords on his wrists, then, stooping down, he cut the cord on his feet; and, straightening himself up, he said to him:

"You are free."

Javert was not easily astonished. Still, master of himself though he was, he could not repress a start. He remained open-mouthed and motionless.

Jean Valjean continued :

"I do not think that I shall escape from this place. But if, by chance, I do, I live, under the name of Fauchelevent, in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7."

Javert snarled like a tiger, which made him half open one corner of his mouth, and he muttered between his teeth :

"Have a care."

"Go," said Jean Valjean.

Javert began again :

"Thou saidst Fauchelevent, Rue de l'Homme Armé?"

"Number 7."

Javert repeated in a low voice : — "Number 7."

He buttoned up his coat once more, resumed the military stiffness between his shoulders, made a half turn, folded his arms and, supporting his chin on one of his hands, he set out in the direction of the Halles. Jean Valjean followed him with his eyes.

A few minutes later, Javert turned round and shouted to Jean Valjean :

"You annoy me. Kill me, rather."

Javert himself did not notice that he no longer addressed Jean Valjean as "thou."

"Be off with you," said Jean Valjean.

Javert retreated slowly. A moment later he turned the corner of the Rue des Prêcheurs.

When Javert had disappeared, Jean Valjean fired his pistol in the air.

Then he returned to the barricade and said :

"It is done."

In the meanwhile, this is what had taken place.

Marius, more intent on the outside than on the interior, had not, up to that time, taken a good look at the pinioned spy in the dark background of the tap-room.

When he beheld him in broad daylight, striding over the barricade in order to proceed to his death, he recognized him. Something suddenly recurred to his mind. He recalled the inspector of the Rue de Pontoise, and the two pistols which the latter had handed to him and which he, Marius, had used in this very barricade, and not only did he recall his face, but his name as well.

This recollection was misty and troubled, however, like all his ideas.

It was not an affirmation that he made, but a question which he put to himself.

"Is not that the inspector of police who told me that his name was Javert?"

Perhaps there was still time to intervene in behalf of that man. But, in the first place, he must know whether this was Javert.

Marius called to Enjolras, who had just stationed himself at the other extremity of the barricade:

"Enjolras!"

"What?"

"What is the name of yonder man?"

"What man?"

"The police agent. Do you know his name?"

"Of course. He told us."

"What is it?"

"Javert."

Marius sprang to his feet.

At that moment, they heard the report of the pistol.

Jean Valjean re-appeared and cried: "It is done."

A gloomy chill traversed Marius' heart.

XX. — THE DEAD ARE IN THE RIGHT AND THE LIVING ARE NOT IN THE WRONG.

THE death agony of the barricade was about to begin.

Everything contributed to its tragic majesty at that supreme moment; a thousand mysterious crashes in the air, the breath of armed masses set in movement in the streets which were not visible, the intermittent gallop of cavalry, the heavy shock of artillery on the march, the firing by squads, and the cannonades crossing each other in the labyrinth of Paris, the smokes of battle mounting all gilded above the roofs, indescribable and vaguely terrible cries, lightnings of menace everywhere, the tocsin of Saint-Merry, which now had the accents of a sob, the mildness of the weather, the splendor of the sky filled with sun and clouds, the beauty of the day, and the alarming silence of the houses.

For, since the preceding evening, the two rows of houses in the Rue de la Chanvrière had become two walls; ferocious walls, doors closed, windows closed, shutters closed.

In those days, so different from those in which we live, when the hour was come, when the people wished to put an end to a situation, which had lasted too long, with a charter granted or with a legal country, when universal wrath was diffused in the atmosphere, when the city consented to the

tearing up of the pavements, when insurrection made the bourgeoisie smile by whispering its password in its ear, then the inhabitant, thoroughly penetrated with the revolt, so to speak, was the auxiliary of the combatant, and the house fraternized with the improvised fortress which rested on it. When the situation was not ripe, when the insurrection was not decidedly admitted, when the masses disowned the movement, all was over with the combatants, the city was changed into a desert around the revolt, souls grew chilled, refuges were nailed up, and the street turned into a defile to help the army to take the barricade.

A people cannot be forced, through surprise, to walk more quickly than it chooses. Woe to whomsoever tries to force its hand! A people does not let itself go at random. Then it abandons the insurrection to itself. The insurgents become noxious, infected with the plague. A house is an escarpment, a door is a refusal, a façade is a wall. This wall hears, sees and will not. It might open and save you. No. This wall is a judge. It gazes at you and condemns you. What dismal things are closed houses. They seem dead, they are living. Life which is, as it were, suspended there, persists there. No one has gone out of them for four and twenty hours, but no one is missing from them. In the interior of that rock, people go and come, go to bed and rise again; they are a family party there; there they eat and drink; they are afraid, a terrible thing! Fear excuses this fearful lack of hospitality; terror is mixed with it, an extenuating circumstance. Sometimes, even, and this has been actually seen, fear turns to passion; fright may change into fury, as prudence does into rage; hence this wise saying: "The enraged moderates." There are outbursts of supreme terror, whence springs wrath like a mournful smoke. — "What do these people want? What have they come there to do? Let them get out of the scrape. So much the worse for them. It is their fault. They are only getting what they deserve. It does not concern us. Here is our poor street all riddled with balls. They are a pack of rascals. Above all things, don't open the door." — And the house assumes the air of a tomb. The insurgent is in the death-throes in front of that house; he sees the grape-shot and naked swords drawing near; if he cries, he knows that they are listening to him, and that no one will come; there stand walls which might protect him, there are men who might save him; and these walls have ears of flesh, and these men have bowels of stone.

Whom shall he reproach ?

No one and every one.

The incomplete times in which we live. .

It is always at its own risk and peril that Utopia is converted into revolution, and from philosophical protest becomes an armed protest, and from Minerva turns to Pallas.

The Utopia which grows impatient and becomes revolt knows what awaits it; it almost always comes too soon. Then it becomes resigned, and stoically accepts catastrophe in lieu of triumph. It serves those who deny it without complaint, even excusing them, and even disculpates them, and its magnanimity consists in consenting to abandonment. It is indomitable in the face of obstacles and gentle towards ingratitude.

Is this ingratitude, however ?

Yes, from the point of view of the human race.

No, from the point of view of the individual.

Progress is man's mode of existence. The general life of the human race is called Progress, the collective stride of the human race is called Progress. Progress advances; it makes the great human and terrestrial journey towards the celestial and the divine; it has its halting places where it rallies the laggard troop, it has its stations where it meditates, in the presence of some splendid Canaan suddenly unveiled on its horizon, it has its nights when it sleeps; and it is one of the poignant anxieties of the thinker that he sees the shadow resting on the human soul, and that he gropes in darkness without being able to awaken that slumbering Progress.

"God is dead, perhaps," said Gerard de Nerval one day to the writer of these lines, confounding progress with God, and taking the interruption of movement for the death of Being.

He who despairs is in the wrong. Progress infallibly awakes, and, in short, we may say that it marches on, even when it is asleep, for it has increased in size. When we behold it erect once more, we find it taller. To be always peaceful does not depend on progress any more than it does on the stream; erect no barriers, cast in no boulders; obstacles make water froth and humanity boil. Hence arise troubles; but after these troubles, we recognize the fact that ground has been gained. Until order, which is nothing else than universal peace, has been established, until harmony and unity reign, progress will have revolutions as its halting-places.

What, then, is progress? We have just enunciated it; the permanent life of the peoples.

Now, it sometimes happens, that the momentary life of individuals offers resistance to the eternal life of the human race.

Let us admit without bitterness, that the individual has his distinct interests, and can, without forfeiture, stipulate for his interest, and defend it; the present has its pardonable dose of egotism; momentary life has its rights, and is not bound to sacrifice itself constantly to the future. The generation which is passing in its turn over the earth, is not forced to abridge it for the sake of the generations, its equal, after all, who will have their turn later on. — "I exist," murmurs that some one whose name is All. "I am young and in love, I am old and I wish to repose, I am the father of a family, I toil, I prosper, I am successful in business, I have houses to lease, I have money in the government funds, I am happy, I have a wife and children, I have all this, I desire to live, leave me in peace." — Hence, at certain hours, a profound cold broods over the unanimous van-guard of the human race.

Utopia, moreover, we must admit, quits its radiant sphere when it makes war. It, the truth of to-morrow, borrows its mode of procedure, battle, from the lie of yesterday. It, the future, behaves like the past. It, pure idea, becomes a deed of violence. It complicates its heroism with a violence for which it is just that it should be held to answer; a violence of occasion and expedient, contrary to principle, and for which it is fatally punished. The Utopia, insurrection, fights with the old military code in its fist; it shoots spies, it executes traitors; it suppresses living beings and flings them into unknown darkness. It makes use of death, a serious matter. It seems as though Utopia had no longer any faith in radiance, its irresistible and incorruptible force. It strikes with the sword. Now, no sword is simple. Every blade has two edges; he who wounds with the one is wounded with the other.

Having made this reservation, and made it with all severity, it is impossible for us not to admire, whether they succeed or not, those the glorious combatants of the future, the confessors of Utopia. Even when they miscarry, they are worthy of veneration; and it is, perhaps, in failure, that they possess the most majesty. Victory, when it is in accord with progress, merits the applause of the people; but a heroic defeat merits their tender compassion. The one is magnifi-

cent, the other sublime. For our own part, we prefer martyrdom to success. John Brown is greater than Washington, and Pisacane is greater than Garibaldi.

It certainly is necessary that some one should take the part of the vanquished.

We are unjust towards these great men who attempt the future, when they fail.

Revolutionists are accused of sowing fear abroad. Every barricade seems a crime. Their theories are incriminated, their aim suspected, their ulterior motive is feared, their conscience denounced. They are reproached with raising, erecting, and heaping up, against the reigning social state, a mass of miseries, of griefs, of iniquities, of wrongs, of despairs, and of tearing from the lowest depths blocks of shadow in order therein to embattle themselves and to combat. People shout to them: "You are tearing up the pavements of hell!" They might reply: "That is because our barricade is made of good intentions."

The best thing, assuredly, is the pacific solution. In short, let us agree that when we behold the pavement, we think of the bear, and it is a good will which renders society uneasy. But it depends on society to save itself; it is to its own good will that we make our appeal. No violent remedy is necessary. To study evil amiably, to prove its existence, then to cure it. It is to this that we invite it.

However that may be, even when fallen, above all when fallen, these men, who at every point of the universe, with their eyes fixed on France, are striving for the grand work with the inflexible logic of the ideal, are august; they give their life a free offering to progress; they accomplish the will of providence; they perform a religious act. At the appointed hour, with as much disinterestedness as an actor who answers to his cue, in obedience to the divine stage-manager, they enter the tomb. And this hopeless combat, this stoical disappearance they accept in order to bring about the supreme and universal consequences, the magnificent and irresistibly human movement begun on the 14th of July, 1789; these soldiers are priests. The French revolution is an act of God.

Moreover, there are, and it is proper to add this distinction to the distinctions already pointed out in another chapter,—there are accepted revolutions, revolutions which are called revolutions; there are refused revolutions, which are called riots.

An insurrection which breaks out, is an idea which is pass-

ing its examination before the people. If the people lets fall a black ball, the idea is dried fruit; the insurrection is a mere skirmish.

Waging war at every summons and every time that Utopia desires it, is not the thing for the peoples. Nations have not always and at every hour the temperament of heroes and martyrs.

They are positive. *A priori*, insurrection is repugnant to them, in the first place, because it often results in a catastrophe, in the second place, because it always has an abstraction as its point of departure.

Because, and this is a noble thing, it is always for the ideal, and for the ideal alone, that those who sacrifice themselves do thus sacrifice themselves. An insurrection is an enthusiasm. Enthusiasm may wax wroth; hence the appeal to arms. But every insurrection, which aims at a government or a régime, aims higher. Thus, for instance, and we insist upon it, what the chiefs of the insurrection of 1832, and, in particular, the young enthusiasts of the Rue de la Chanvrière were combating, was not precisely Louis Philippe. The majority of them, when talking freely, did justice to this king who stood midway between monarchy and revolution; no one hated him. But they attacked the younger branch of the divine right in Louis Philippe as they had attacked its elder branch in Charles X.; and that which they wished to overturn in overturning royalty in France, was, as we have explained, the usurpation of man over man, and of privilege over right in the entire universe. Paris without a king has as result the world without despots. This is the manner in which they reasoned. Their aim was distant no doubt, vague perhaps, and it retreated in the face of their efforts; but it was great.

Thus it is. And we sacrifice ourselves for these visions, which are almost always illusions for the sacrificed, but illusions with which, after all, the whole of human certainty is mingled. We throw ourselves into these tragic affairs and become intoxicated with that which we are about to do. Who knows? We may succeed. We are few in number, we have a whole army arrayed against us; but we are defending right, the natural law, the sovereignty of each one over himself from which no abdication is possible, justice and truth, and in case of need, we die like the three hundred Spartans. We do not think of Don Quixote but of Leonidas. And we march straight before us, and once pledged, we do not draw

back, and we rush onwards with head held low, cherishing as our hope an unprecedented victory, revolution completed, progress set free again, the aggrandizement of the human race, universal deliverance; and in event of the worst, Thermopylæ.

These passages of arms for the sake of progress often suffer shipwreck, and we have just explained why. The crowd is restive in the presence of the impulses of paladins. Heavy masses, the multitudes which are fragile because of their very weight, fear adventures; and there is a touch of adventure in the ideal.

Moreover, and we must not forget this, interests which are not very friendly to the ideal and the sentimental are in the way. Sometimes the stomach paralyzes the heart.

The grandeur and beauty of France lies in this, that she takes less from the stomach than other nations: she more easily knots the rope about her loins. She is the first awake, the last asleep. She marches forwards. She is a seeker.

This arises from the fact that she is an artist.

The ideal is nothing but the culminating point of logic, the same as the beautiful is nothing but the summit of the true. Artistic peoples are also consistent peoples. To love beauty is to see the light. This is why the torch of Europe, that is to say of civilization, was first borne by Greece, who passed it on to Italy, who handed it on to France. Divine, illuminating nations of scouts! *Vitæ lampada tradunt.*

It is an admirable thing that the poetry of a people is the element of its progress. The amount of civilization is measured by the quantity of imagination. Only, a civilizing people should remain a manly people. Corinth, yes; Sybaris, no. Whoever becomes effeminate makes himself a bastard. He must be neither a dilettante nor a virtuoso: but he must be artistic. In the matter of civilization, he must not refine, but he must sublime. On this condition, one gives to the human race the pattern of the ideal.

The modern ideal has its type in art, and its means is science. It is through science that it will realize that august vision of the poets, the socially beautiful. Eden will be reconstructed by A+B. At the point which civilization has now reached, the exact is a necessary element of the splendid, and the artistic sentiment is not only served, but completed by the scientific organ; dreams must be calculated. Art, which is the conqueror, should have for support science, which is the walker; the solidity of the creature which is

ridden is of importance. The modern spirit is the genius of Greece with the genius of India as its vehicle; Alexander on the elephant.

Races which are petrified in dogma or demoralized by lucre are unfit to guide civilization. Genuflection before the idol or before money wastes away the muscles which walk and the will which advances. Hieratic or mercantile absorption lessens a people's power of radiance, lowers its horizon by lowering its level, and deprives it of that intelligence, at once both human and divine of the universal goal, which makes missionaries of nations. Babylon has no ideal; Carthage has no ideal. Athens and Rome have and keep, throughout all the nocturnal darkness of the centuries, halos of civilization.

France is the same quality of race as Greece and Italy. She is Athenian in the matter of beauty, and Roman in her greatness. Moreover, she is good. She gives herself. Oftener than is the case with other races, is she in the humor for self-devotion and sacrifice. Only, this humor seizes upon her and again abandons her. And therein lies the great peril for those who run when she desires only to walk, or who walk on when she desires to halt. France has her relapses into materialism, and, at certain instants, the ideas which obstruct that sublime brain have no longer anything which recalls French greatness and are of the dimensions of a Missouri or a South Carolina. What is to be done in such a case? The giantess plays at being a dwarf; immense France has her freaks of pettiness. That is all.

To this there is nothing to say. Peoples, like planets, possess the right to an eclipse. And all is well, provided that the light returns and that the eclipse does not degenerate into night. Dawn and resurrection are synonymous. The re-appearance of the light is identical with the persistence of the *I*.

Let us state these facts calmly. Death on the barricade or the tomb in exile, is an acceptable occasion for devotion. The real name of devotion, is disinterestedness. Let the abandoned allow themselves to be abandoned, let the exiled allow themselves to be exiled, and let us confine ourselves to entreating great nations not to retreat too far, when they do retreat. One must not push too far in descent under pretext of a return to reason.

Matter exists, the minute exists, interest exist, the stomach exists; but the stomach must not be the sole wisdom. The

life of the moment has its rights, we admit, but permanent life has its rights also. Alas! the fact that one is mounted does not preclude a fall. This can be seen in history more frequently than is desirable: A nation is great, it tastes the ideal, then it bites the mire, and finds it good; and if it be asked how it happens that it has abandoned Socrates for Falstaff, it replies: "Because I love statesmen."

One word more before returning to our subject, the conflict.

A battle like the one which we are engaged in describing is nothing else than a convulsion towards the ideal. Progress trammelled is sickly, and is subject to these tragic epilepsies. With that malady of progress, civil war, we have been obliged to come in contact in our passage. This is one of the fatal phases, at once act and entr'acte of that drama whose pivot is a social condemnation, and whose veritable title is *Progress*.

Progress!

The cry to which we frequently give utterance is our whole thought; and, at the point of this drama which we have now reached, the idea which it contains having still more than one trial to undergo, it is, perhaps, permitted to us, if not to lift the veil from it, to at least allow its light to shine through.

The book which the reader has under his eye at this moment, is, from one end to the other, as a whole and in detail, whatever may be its intermittances, exceptions and faults, the march from evil to good, from the unjust to the just, from night to day, from appetite to conscience, from rottenness to life, from hell to heaven, from nothingness to God. Point of departure: matter; point of arrival: the soul. The hydra at the beginning, the angel at the end.

XXI.—THE HEROES.

ALL at once, the drum beat the charge.

The attack was a hurricane. On the evening before, in the darkness, the barricade had been approached silently, as by a boa. Now, in broad daylight, in that widening street, surprise was decidedly impossible, rude force had, moreover, been unmasked, the cannon had begun the roar, the army hurled itself on the barricade. Fury now became skill. A powerful detachment of infantry of the line, broken at regular intervals, by the National Guard and the Municipal Guard on foot, and supported by serried masses which could be heard though not seen, debouched into the street at a run, with drums beating,

trumpets braying, bayonets levelled, the sappers at their head, and, imperturbable under the projectiles, charged straight for the barricade with the weight of a brazen beam against a wall.

The wall held firm.

The insurgents fired impetuously. The barricade once scaled had a mane of lightning flashes. The assault was so furious, that for one moment, it was inundated with assailants; but it shook off the soldiers as the lion shakes off the dogs, and it was only covered with besiegers as the cliff is covered with foam, to re-appear, a moment later, beetling, black and formidable.

The column, forced to retreat, remained massed in the street, unprotected but terrible, and replied to the redoubt with a terrible discharge of musketry. Any one who has seen fireworks will recall the sheaf formed of interlacing lightnings which is called a bouquet. Let the reader picture to himself this bouquet, no longer vertical but horizontal, bearing a bullet, buck-shot or a biscaïen at the tip of each one of its jets of flame, and picking off dead men one after another from its clusters of lightning. The barricade was underneath it.

On both sides, the resolution was equal. The bravery exhibited there was almost barbarous and was complicated with a sort of heroic ferocity which began by the sacrifice of self.

This was the epoch when a National Guardsman fought like a Zouave. The troop wished to make an end of it, insurrection was desirous of fighting. The acceptance of the death agony in the flower of youth and in the flush of health turns intrepidity into frenzy. In this fray, each one underwent the broadening growth of the death hour. The street was strewn with corpses.

The barricade had Enjolras at one of its extremities and Marius at the other. Enjolras, who carried the whole barricade in his head, reserved and sheltered himself; three soldiers fell, one after the other, under his embrasure without having even seen him; Marius fought unprotected. He made himself a target. He stood with more than half his body above the breastworks. There is no more violent prodigal than the avaricious man who takes the bit in his teeth; there is no man more terrible in action, than a dreamer. Marius was formidable and pensive. In battle he was as in a dream. One would have pronounced him a phantom engaged in firing a gun.

The insurgents' cartridges were giving out; but not their

sarcasms. In this whirlwind of the sepulchre in which they stood, they laughed.

Courfeyrac was bare-headed.

"What have you done with your hat?" Bossuet asked him.

Courfeyrac replied:

"They have finally taken it away from me with cannon-balls."

Or they uttered haughty comments.

"Can any one understand," exclaimed Feully bitterly, "those men, — [and he cited names, well-known names, even celebrated names, some belonging to the old army] — who had promised to join us, and taken an oath to aid us, and who had pledged their honor to it, and who are our generals, and who abandon us!"

And Combeferre restricted himself to replying with a grave smile.

"There are people who observe the rules of honor as one observes the stars, from a great distance."

The interior of the barricade was so strewn with torn cartridges that one would have said that there had been a snow-storm.

The assailants had numbers in their favor; the insurgents had position. They were at the top of a wall, and they thundered point blank upon the soldiers tripping over the dead and wounded and entangled in the escarpment. This barricade, constructed as it was and admirably buttressed, was really one of those situations where a handful of men hold a legion in check. Nevertheless, the attacking column, constantly recruited and enlarged under the shower of bullets, drew inexorably nearer, and now, little by little, step by step, but surely, the army closed in around the barricade as the vice grasps the wine-press.

One assault followed another. The horror of the situation kept increasing.

Then there burst forth on that heap of paving-stones, in that Rue de la Chanvrerie, a battle worthy of a wall of Troy. These haggard, ragged, exhausted men, who had had nothing to eat for four and twenty hours, who had not slept, who had but a few more rounds to fire, who were fumbling in their pockets which had been emptied of cartridges, nearly all of whom were wounded, with head or arm bandaged with black and blood-stained linen, with holes in their clothes from which the blood trickled, and who were hardly armed with poor guns and notched swords, became Titans. The barricade was ten

times attacked, approached, assailed, scaled, and never captured.

In order to form an idea of this struggle, it is necessary to imagine fire set to a throng of terrible courages, and then to gaze at the conflagration. It was not a combat, it was the interior of a furnace; there mouths breathed the flame; there countenances were extraordinary. The human form seemed impossible there, the combatants flamed forth there, and it was formidable to behold the going and coming in that red glow of those salamanders of the fray.

The successive and simultaneous scenes of this grand slaughter we renounce all attempts at depicting. The epic alone has the right to fill twelve thousand verses with a battle.

One would have pronounced this that hell of Brahmanism, the most redoubtable of the seventeen abysses, which the Veda calls the Forest of Swords.

They fought hand to hand, foot to foot, with pistol shots, with blows of the sword, with their fists, at a distance, close at hand, from above, from below, from everywhere, from the roofs of the houses, from the windows of the wine-shop, from the cellar windows, whither some had crawled. They were one against sixty.

The façade of Corinthe, half demolished, was hideous. The window, tattooed with grape-shot, had lost glass and frame and was nothing now but a shapeless hole, tumultuously blocked with paving-stones.

Bossuet was killed; Feuilly was killed; Courfeyrac was killed; Combeferre, transfixed by three blows from a bayonet in the breast at the moment when he was lifting up a wounded soldier, had only time to cast a glance to heaven when he expired.

Marius, still fighting, was so riddled with wounds, particularly in the head, that his countenance disappeared beneath the blood, and one would have said that his face was covered with a red kerchief.

Enjolras alone was not struck. When he had no longer any weapon, he reached out his hands to right and left and an insurgent thrust some arm or other into his fist. All he had left was the stumps of four swords; one more than François I. at Marignan. Homer says: "Diomedes cuts the throat of Axylus, son of Teuthranis, who dwelt in happy Arisba; Euryalus, son of Mecistæus, exterminates Dresos and Opheltios, Esepius, and that Pedasus whom the naiad Abarbarea bore to the blameless Bucolion; Ulysses overthrows Pidytes of Per-

cosius; Antilochus, Ablerus; Polypætes, Astyalus; Polydamas, Otos, of Cyllene; and Teucer, Aretaon. Meganthios dies under the blows of Euripylus' pike. Agamemnon, king of the heroes, flings to earth Elatos, born in the rocky city which is laved by the sounding river Satnois." In our old poems of exploits, Esplandian attacks the giant marquis Swantibore with a cobbler's shoulder-stick of fire, and the latter defends himself by stoning the hero with towers which he plucks up by the roots. Our ancient mural frescoes show us the two Dukes of Bretagne and Bourbon, armed, emblazoned and crested in war-like guise, on horseback and approaching each other, their battle-axes in hand, masked with iron, gloved with iron, booted with iron, the one caparisoned in ermine, the other draped in azure: Bretagne with his lion between the two horns of his crown, Bourbon helmeted with a monster fleur de lys on his visor. But, in order to be superb, it is not necessary to wear, like Yvon, the ducal morion, to have in the fist, like Esplandian, a living flame, or, like Phyles, father of Polydamas, to have brought back from Ephyra a good suit of mail, a present from the king of men, Euphetes; it suffices to give one's life for a conviction or a loyalty. This ingenuous little soldier, yesterday a peasant of Bauce or Limousin, who prowls with his clasp-knife by his side, around the children's nurses in the Luxembourg garden, this pale young student bent over a piece of anatomy or a book, a blond youth who shaves his beard with scissors, — take both of them, breathe upon them with a breath of duty, place them face to face in the Carrefour Boucherat or in the blind alley Planche-Mibray, and let the one fight for his flag, and the other for his ideal, and let both of them imagine that they are fighting for their country; the struggle will be colossal; and the shadow which this raw recruit and this saw-bones in conflict will produce in that grand epic field where humanity is striving, will equal the shadow cast by Megaryon, King of Lycia, tiger-filled, crushing in his embrace the immense body of Ajax, equal to the gods.

XXII. — FOOT TO FOOT.

WHEN there were no longer any of the leaders left alive, except Enjolras and Marius at the two extremities of the barricade, the centre, which had so long sustained Courfeyrac, Joly, Bossuet, Feuilly and Combeferre, gave way. The cannon, though it had not effected a practicable breach, had made a

rather large hollow in the middle of the redoubt; there, the summit of the wall had disappeared before the balls, and had crumbled away; and the rubbish which had fallen, now inside, now outside, had, as it accumulated, formed two piles in the nature of slopes on the two sides of the barrier, one on the inside, the other on the outside. The exterior slope presented an inclined plane to the attack.

A final assault was there attempted, and this assault succeeded. The mass bristling with bayonets and hurled forward at a run, came up with irresistible force, and the serried front of battle of the attacking column made its appearance through the smoke on the crest of the battlements. This time, it was decisive. The group of insurgents who were defending the centre retreated in confusion.

Then the gloomy love of life awoke once more in some of them. Many, finding themselves under the muzzles of this forest of guns, did not wish to die. This is a moment when the instinct of self-preservation emits howls, when the beast re-appears in men. They were hemmed in by the lofty, six-story house which formed the background of their redoubt. This house might prove their salvation. The building was barricaded, and walled, as it were, from top to bottom. Before the troops of the line had reached the interior of the redoubt, there was time for a door to open and shut, the space of a flash of lightning was sufficient for that, and the door of that house, suddenly opened a crack and closed again instantly was life for these despairing men. Behind this house, there were streets, possible flight, space. They set to knocking at that door with the butts of their guns, and with kicks, shouting, calling, entreating, wringing their hands. No one opened. From the little window on the third floor, the head of the dead man gazed down upon them.

But Enjolras and Marius, and the seven or eight rallied about them, sprang forward and protected them. Enjolras had shouted to the soldiers: "Don't advance!" and as an officer had not obeyed, Enjolras had killed the officer. He was now in the little inner court of the redoubt, with his back planted against the Corinthe building, a sword in one hand, a rifle in the other, holding open the door of the wine-shop which he barred against assailants. He shouted to the desperate men: — "There is but one door open; this one." — And shielding them with his body, and facing an entire battalion alone, he made them pass in behind him. All precipitated themselves thither. Enjolras, executing with his rifle, which

he now used like a cane, what single-stick players call a "covered rose" round his head, leveled the bayonets around and in front of him, and was the last to enter; and then ensued a horrible moment, when the soldiers tried to make their way in, and the insurgents strove to bar them out. The door was slammed with such violence, that, as it fell back into its frame, it showed the five fingers of a soldier who had been clinging to it, cut off and glued to the post.

Marius remained outside. A shot had just broken his collar bone, he felt that he was fainting and falling. At that moment, with eyes already shut, he felt the shock of a vigorous hand seizing him, and the swoon in which his senses vanished, hardly allowed him time for the thought, mingled with a last memory of Cosette:—"I am taken prisoner. I shall be shot."

Enjolras, not seeing Marius among those who had taken refuge in the wine-shop, had the same idea. But they had reached a moment when each man has not the time to meditate on his own death. Enjolras fixed the bar across the door, and bolted it, and doubled-locked it with key and chain, while those outside were battering furiously at it, the soldiers with the butts of their muskets, the sappers with their axes. The assailants were grouped about that door. The siege of the wine-shop was now beginning.

The soldiers, we will observe, were full of wrath.

The death of the artillery-sergeant had enraged them, and then, a still more melancholy circumstance, during the few hours which had preceded the attack, it had been reported among them that the insurgents were mutilating their prisoners, and that there was the headless body of a soldier in the wine-shop. This sort of fatal rumor is the usual accompaniment of civil wars, and it was a false report of this kind which, later on, produced the catastrophe of the Rue Trans-nain.

When the door was barricaded, Enjolras said to the others: "Let us sell our lives dearly."

Then he approached the table on which lay Mabeuf and Gavroche. Beneath the black cloth two straight and rigid forms were visible, one large, the other small, and the two faces were vaguely outlined beneath the cold folds of the shroud. A hand projected from beneath the winding sheet and hung near the floor. It was that of the old man.

Enjolras bent down and kissed that venerable hand, just as he had kissed his brow on the preceding evening.

These were the only two kisses which he had bestowed in the course of his life.

Let us abridge the tale. The barricade had fought like a gate of Thebes; the wine-shop fought like a house of Saragossa. These resistances are dogged. No quarter. No flag of truce possible. Men are willing to die, provided their opponent will kill them.

When Suchet says: — “Capitulate,” — Palafox replies: “After the war with cannon, the war with knives.” Nothing was lacking in the capture by assault of the Hucheloup wine-shop; neither paving-stones raining from the windows and the roof on the besiegers and exasperating the soldiers by crushing them horribly, nor shots fired from the attic-windows and the cellar, nor the fury of attack, nor, finally, when the door yielded, the frenzied madness of extermination. The assailants, rushing into the wine-shop, their feet entangled in the panels of the door which had been beaten in and flung on the ground, found not a single combatant there. The spiral staircase, hewn asunder with the axe, lay in the middle of the tap-room, a few wounded men were just breathing their last, every one who was not killed was on the first floor, and from there, through the hole in the ceiling, which had formed the entrance of the stairs, a terrific fire burst forth. It was the last of their cartridges. When they were exhausted, when these formidable men on the point of death had no longer either powder or ball, each grasped in his hands two of the bottles which Enjolras had reserved, and of which we have spoken, and held the scaling party in check with these frightfully fragile clubs. They were bottles of aqua-fortis.

We relate these gloomy incidents of carnage as they occurred. The besieged man, alas! converts everything into a weapon. Greek fire did not disgrace Archimedes, boiling pitch did not disgrace Bayard. All war is a thing of terror, and there is no choice in it. The musketry of the besiegers, though confined and embarrassed by being directed from below upwards, was deadly. The rim of the hole in the ceiling was speedily surrounded by heads of the slain, whence dripped long, red and smoking streams. the uproar was indescribable; a close and burning smoke almost produced night over this combat. Words are lacking to express horror when it has reached this pitch. There were no longer men in this conflict, which was now infernal. They were no longer giants matched with colossi. It resembled Milton and Dante rather than Homer. Demons attacked, spectres resisted.

It was heroism become monstrous.

XXIII. — ORESTES FASTING AND PYLADES DRUNK.

At length, by dint of mounting on each other's backs, aiding themselves with the skeleton of the staircase, climbing up the walls, clinging to the ceiling, slashing away at the very brink of the trap-door, the last one who offered resistance, a score of assailants, soldiers, National Guardsmen, municipal guardsmen, in utter confusion, the majority disfigured by wounds in the face during that redoubtable ascent, blinded by blood, furious, rendered savage, made an irruption into the apartment on the first floor. There they found only one man still on his feet, Enjolras. Without cartridges, without sword, he had nothing in his hand now but the barrel of his gun whose stock he had broken over the head of those who were entering. He had placed the billiard-table between his assailants and himself; he had retreated into the corner of the room, and there, with haughty eye, and head borne high, with this stump of a weapon in his hand, he was still so alarming as to speedily create an empty space around him. A cry arose :

"He is the leader ! It was he who slew the artillery-man. It is well that he has placed himself there. Let him remain there. Let us shoot him down on the spot."

"Shoot me," said Enjolras.

And flinging away his bit of gun-barrel, and folding his arms, he offered his breast.

The audacity of a fine death always affects men. As soon as Enjolras folded his arms and accepted his end, the din of strife ceased in the room, and this chaos suddenly stilled into a sort of sepulchral solemnity. The menacing majesty of Enjolras disarmed and motionless, appeared to oppress this tumult, and this young man, haughty, bloody, and charming, who alone had not a wound, who was as indifferent as an invulnerable being, seemed, by the authority of his tranquil glance, to constrain this sinister rabble to kill him respectfully. His beauty, at that moment augmented by his pride, was resplendent, and he was fresh and rosy after the fearful four and twenty hours which had just elapsed, as though he could no more be fatigued than wounded. It was of him, possibly, that a witness spoke afterwards, before the council of war : "There was an insurgent whom I heard called Apollo." A National Guardsman who had taken aim at Enjolras, lowered his gun, saying : "It seems to me that I am about to shoot a flower."

Twelve men formed into a squad in the corner opposite Enjolras, and silently made ready their guns.

Then a sergeant shouted :

“Take aim !”

An officer intervened.

“Wait.”

And addressing Enjolras :

“Do you wish to have your eyes bandaged ?”

“No.”

“Was it you who killed the artillery sergeant ?”

“Yes.”

Grantaire had waked up a few moments before.

Grantaire, it will be remembered, had been asleep ever since the preceding evening in the upper room of the wine-shop, seated on a chair and leaning on the table.

He realized in its fullest sense the old metaphor of “dead drunk.” The hideous potion of absinthe-porter and alcohol, had thrown him into a lethargy. His table being small, and not suitable for the barricade, he had been left in possession of it. He was still in the same posture, with his breast bent over the table, his head lying flat on his arms, surrounded by glasses, beer-jugs and bottles. His was the overwhelming slumber of the torpid bear and the satiated leech. Nothing had had any effect upon it, neither the fusillade, nor the cannon-balls, nor the grape-shot which had made its way through the window into the room where he was. Nor the tremendous uproar of the assault. He merely replied to the cannonade, now and then, by a snore. He seemed to be waiting there for a bullet which should spare him the trouble of waking. Many corpses were strewn around him ; and, at the first glance, there was nothing to distinguish him from those profound sleepers of death.

Noise does not rouse a drunken man ; silence awakens him. The fall of everything around him only augmented Grantaire’s prostration ; the crumbling of all things was his lullaby. The sort of halt which the tumult underwent in the presence of Enjolras was a shock to this heavy slumber. It had the effect of a carriage going at full speed, which suddenly comes to a dead stop. The persons dozing within it wake up. Grantaire rose to his feet with a start, stretched out his arms, rubbed his eyes, stared, yawned, and understood.

A fit of drunkenness reaching its end resembles a curtain which is torn away. One beholds, at a single glance and as a whole, all that it has concealed. All suddenly presents itself

to the memory ; and the drunkard who has known nothing of what has been taking place during the last twenty-four hours, has no sooner opened his eyes than he is perfectly informed. Ideas recur to him with abrupt lucidity ; the obliteration of intoxication, a sort of steam which has obscured the brain, is dissipated, and makes way for the clear and sharply outlined importunity of realities.

Relegated, as he was, to one corner, and sheltered behind the billiard-table, the soldiers whose eyes were fixed on Enjolras, had not even noticed Grantaire, and the sergeant was preparing to repeat his order : " Take aim ! " when all at once, they heard a strong voice shout beside them :

" Long live the Republic ! I'm one of them."

Grantaire had risen. The immense gleam of the whole combat which he had missed, and in which he had had no part, appeared in the brilliant glance of the transfigured drunken man.

He repeated : " Long live the Republic ! " crossed the room with a firm stride and placed himself in front of the guns beside Enjolras.

" Finish both of us at one blow," said he.

And turning gently to Enjolras, he said to him :

" Do you permit it ? "

Enjolras pressed his hand with a smile.

This smile was not ended when the report resounded.

Enjolras, pierced by eight bullets, remained leaning against the wall, as though the balls had nailed him there. Only, his head was bowed.

Grantaire fell at his feet, as though struck by a thunder-bolt.

A few moments later, the soldiers dislodged the last remaining insurgents, who had taken refuge at the top of the house. They fired into the attic through a wooden lattice. They fought under the very roof. They flung bodies, some of them still alive, out through the windows. Two light-infantrymen, who tried to lift the shattered omnibus, were slain by two shots fired from the attic. A man in a blouse was flung down from it, with a bayonet wound in the abdomen, and breathed his last on the ground. A soldier and an insurgent slipped together on the sloping slates of the roof, and, as they would not release each other, they fell, clasped in a ferocious embrace. A similar conflict went on in the cellar. Shouts, shots, a fierce trampling. Then silence. The barricade was captured.

The soldiers began to search the houses round about, and to pursue the fugitives.

XXIV. — PRISONER.

MARIUS was, in fact, a prisoner.

The hand which had seized him from behind and whose grasp he had felt at the moment of his fall and his loss of consciousness, was that of Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean had taken no other part in the combat than to expose himself in it. Had it not been for him, no one, in that supreme phase of agony, would have thought of the wounded. Thanks to him, everywhere present in the carnage, like a providence, those who fell were picked up, transported to the tap-room, and cared for. In the intervals, he re-appeared on the barricade. But nothing which could resemble a blow, an attack or even personal defence proceeded from his hands. He held his peace and lent succor. Moreover, he had received only a few scratches. The bullets would have none of him. If suicide formed part of what he had meditated on coming to this sepulchre, to that spot, he had not succeeded. But we doubt whether he had thought of suicide, an irreligious act.

Jean Valjean, in the thick cloud of the combat, did not appear to see Marius; the truth is, that he never took his eyes from the latter. When a shot laid Marius low, Jean Valjean leaped forward with the agility of a tiger, fell upon him as on his prey, and bore him off.

The whirlwind of the attack was, at that moment, so violently concentrated upon Enjolras and upon the door of the wine-shop, that no one saw Jean Valjean sustaining the fainting Marius in his arms, traverse the unpaved field of the barricade and disappear behind the angle of the Corinthe building.

The reader will recall this angle which formed a sort of cape on the street; it afforded shelter from the bullets, the grape-shot, and all eyes, and a few square feet of space. There is sometimes a chamber which does not burn in the midst of a conflagration, and in the midst of raging seas, beyond a promontory or at the extremity of a blind alley of shoals, a tranquil nook. It was in this sort of fold in the interior trapezium of the barricade, that Éponine had breathed her last.

There Jean Valjean halted, let Marius slide to the ground, placed his back against the wall, and cast his eyes about him.

The situation was alarming.

For an instant, for two or three perhaps, this bit of wall was a shelter, but how was he to escape from this massacre? He recalled the anguish which he had suffered in the Rue Polonceau eight years before, and in what manner he had contrived to make his escape; it was difficult then, to-day it was impossible. He had before him that deaf and implacable house, six stories in height, which appeared to be inhabited only by a dead man leaning out of his window; he had on his right the rather low barricade, which shut off the Rue de la Petite Truanderie; to pass this obstacle seemed easy, but beyond the crest of the barrier a line of bayonets was visible. The troops of the line were posted on the watch behind that barricade. It was evident, that to pass the barricade was to go in quest of the fire of the platoon, and that any head which should run the risk of lifting itself above the top of that wall of stones, would serve as a target for sixty shots. On his left he had the field of battle. Death lurked round the corner of that wall.

What was to be done?

Only a bird could have extricated itself from this predicament.

And it was necessary to decide on the instant, to devise some expedient, to come to some decision. Fighting was going on a few paces away; fortunately, all were raging around a single point, the door of the wine-shop; but if it should occur to one soldier, to one single soldier to turn the corner of the house, or to attack him on the flank, all was over.

Jean Valjean gazed at the house facing him, he gazed at the barricade at one side of him, then he looked at the ground, with the violence of the last extremity, bewildered, and as though he would have liked to pierce a hole there with his eyes.

By dint of staring, something vaguely striking in such an agony began to assume form and outline at his feet, as though it had been a power of glance which made the thing desired unfold. A few paces distant he perceived, at the base of the small barrier so pitilessly guarded and watched on the exterior, beneath a disordered mass of paving-stones which partly concealed it, an iron grating, placed flat and on a level with the soil. This grating, made of stout, transverse bars, was about two feet square. The frame of paving-stones which supported it had been torn up, and it was, as it were, unfastened.

Through the bars a view could be had of a dark aperture, something like the flue of a chimney, or the pipe of a cistern. Jean Valjean darted forward. His old art of escape rose to his brain like an illumination. To thrust aside the stones, to raise the grating, to lift Marius who was as inert as a dead body, upon his shoulders, to descend, with this burden on his loins, and with the aid of his elbows and knees into that sort of well, fortunately not very deep, to let the heavy trap, upon which the loosened stones rolled down afresh, fall into its place behind him, to gain his footing on a flagged surface three metres below the surface,—all this was executed like that which one does in dreams, with the strength of a giant and the rapidity of an eagle; this took only a few minutes.

Jean Valjean found himself with Marius, who was still unconscious, in a sort of long, subterranean corridor.

There reigned profound peace, absolute silence, night.

The impression which he had formerly experienced when falling from the wall into the convent, recurred to him. Only, what he was carrying to-day was not Cosette; it was Marius. He could barely hear the formidable tumult in the wine-shop, taken by assault, like a vague murmur overhead.



BOOK SECOND.—THE INTESTINE OF THE LEVIATHAN.

I.—THE LAND IMPOVERISHED BY THE SEA.

PARIS casts twenty-five millions yearly into the water. And this without metaphor. How, and in what manner? Day and night. With what object? With no object. With what intention? With no intention. Why? For no reason. By means of what organ? By means of its intestine. What is its intestine? The sewer.

Twenty-five millions is the most moderate approximative figure which the valuations of special science have set upon it.

Science, after having long groped about, now knows that the most fecundating and the most efficacious of fertilizers is human manure. The Chinese, let us confess it to our shame, knew it before us. Not a Chinese peasant—it is Eckberg who says this,—goes to town without bringing back with

him, at the two extremities of his bamboo pole, two full buckets of what we designate as filth. Thanks to human dung, the earth in China is still as young as in the days of Abraham. Chinese wheat yields a hundred fold of the seed. There is no guano comparable in fertility with the detritus of a capital. A great city is the most mighty of dung-makers. Certain success would attend the experiment of employing the city to manure the plain. If our gold is manure, our manure, on the other hand, is gold.

What is done with this golden manure? It is swept into the abyss.

Fleets of vessels are despatched, at great expense, to collect the dung of petrels and penguins at the South Pole, and the incalculable element of opulence which we have on hand, we send to the sea. All the human and animal manure which the world wastes, restored to the land instead of being cast into the water, would suffice to nourish the world.

Those heaps of filth at the gate-posts, those tumbrils of mud which jolt through the streets by night, those terrible casks of the street department, those fetid drippings of subterranean mire, which the pavements hide from you, — do you know what they are? They are the meadow in flower, the green grass, wild thyme, thyme and sage, they are game, they are cattle, they are the satisfied bellows of great oxen in the evening, they are perfumed hay, they are golden wheat, they are the bread on your table, they are the warm blood in your veins, they are health, they are joy, they are life. This is the will of that mysterious creation which is transformation on earth and transfiguration in heaven.

Restore this to the great crucible; your abundance will flow forth from it. The nutrition of the plains furnishes the nourishment of men.

You have it in your power to lose this wealth, and to consider me ridiculous to boot. This will form the master-piece of your ignorance.

Statisticians have calculated that France alone makes a deposit of half a milliard every year, in the Atlantic, through the mouths of her rivers. Note this: with five hundred millions we could pay one quarter of the expenses of our budget. The cleverness of man is such that he prefers to get rid of these five hundred millions in the gutter. It is the very substance of the people that is carried off, here drop by drop, there wave after wave, the wretched outpour of our sewers

into the rivers, and the gigantic collection of our rivers into the ocean. Every hiccough of our sewers costs us a thousand francs. From this spring two results, the land impoverished, and the water tainted. Hunger arising from the furrow, and disease from the stream.

It is notorious, for example, that at the present hour, the Thames is poisoning London.

So far as Paris is concerned, it has become indispensable of late, to transport the mouths of the sewers down stream, below the last bridge.

A double tubular apparatus, provided with valves and sluices, sucking up and driving back, a system of elementary drainage, simple as the lungs of a man, and which is already in full working order in many communities in England, would suffice to conduct the pure water of the fields into our cities, and to send back to the fields the rich water of the cities, and this easy exchange, the simplest in the world, would retain among us the five hundred millions now thrown away. People are thinking of other things.

The process actually in use, does evil, with the intention of doing good. The intention is good, the result is melancholy. Thinking to purge the city, the population is blanched like plants raised in cellars. A sewer is a mistake. When drainage everywhere, with its double function, restoring what it takes, shall have replaced the sewer, which is a simple impoverishing washing, then, this being combined with the data of a now social economy, the product of the earth will be increased tenfold, and the problem of misery will be singularly lightened. Add the suppression of parasitism, and it will be solved.

In the meanwhile, the public wealth flows away to the river, and leakage takes place. Leakage is the word. Europe is being ruined in this manner by exhaustion.

As for France, we have just cited its figures. Now, Paris, contains one twenty-fifth of the total population of France, and Parisian guano being the richest of all, we understate the truth when we value the loss on the part of Paris at twenty-five millions in the half milliard which France annually rejects. These twenty-five millions, employed in assistance and enjoyment, would double the splendor of Paris. The city spends them in sewers. So that we may say that Paris's great prodigality, its wonderful festival, its Beaujon folly, its orgy, its stream of gold from full hands, its pomp, its luxury, its magnificence, is its sewer system.

It is in this manner that, in the blindness of a poor political economy, we drown and allow to float down stream and to be lost in the gulfs the well-being of all. There should be nets at Saint-Cloud for the public fortune.

Economically considered, the matter can be summed up thus: Paris is a spendthrift. Paris, that model city, that patron of well arranged capitals, of which every nation strives to possess a copy, that metropolis of the ideal, that august country of the initiative, of impulse and of effort, that centre and that dwelling of minds, that nation-city, that hive of the future, that marvellous combination of Babylon and Corinth, would make a peasant of the Fo-Kian shrug his shoulders, from the point of view which we have just indicated.

Imitate Paris and you will ruin yourselves.

Moreover, and particularly in this immemorial and senseless waste, Paris is itself, an imitator.

These surprising exhibitions of stupidity are not novel; this is no young folly. The ancients did like the moderns. "The sewers of Rome," says Liebig, "have absorbed all the well-being of the Roman peasant." When the Campagna of Rome was ruined by the Roman sewer, Rome exhausted Italy, and when she had put Italy in her sewer, she poured in Sicily, then Sardinia, then Africa. The sewer of Rome has engulfed the world. This cess-pool offered its engulfment to the city and the universe. *Urbi et orbi*. Eternal city, unfathomable sewer.

Rome sets the example for these things as well as for others.

Paris follows this example with all the stupidity peculiar to intelligent towns.

For the requirements of the operation upon the subject of which we have just explained our views, Paris has beneath it another Paris; a Paris of sewers; which has its streets, its cross-roads, its squares, its blind-alleys, its arteries, and its circulation, which is of mire and minus the human form.

For nothing must be flattered, not even a great people; where there is everything there is also ignominy by the side of sublimity; and, if Paris contains Athens, the city of light, Tyre, the city of might, Sparta, the city of virtue, Nineveh, the city of marvels, it also contains Lutetia, the city of mud.

However, the stamp of its power is there also, and the Titanic sink of Paris realizes, among monuments, that strange ideal realized in humanity by some men like Macchiavelli, Bacon and Mirabeau, grandiose vileness.

The sub-soil of Paris, if the eye could penetrate its surface, would present the aspect of a colossal madrepore. A sponge has no more partitions and ducts than the mound of earth for a circuit of six leagues round about, on which rests the great and ancient city. Not to mention its catacombs, which are a separate cellar, not to mention the inextricable trellis-work of gas pipes, without reckoning the vast tubular system for the distribution of fresh water which ends in the pillar fountains, the sewers alone form a tremendous, shadowy net-work under the two banks; a labyrinth which has its slope for its guiding thread.

There appears, in the humid mist, the rat which seems the product to which Paris has given birth.

II.—ANCIENT HISTORY OF THE SEWER.

LET the reader imagine Paris lifted off like a cover, the subterranean net-work of sewers, from a bird's eye view, will outline on the banks a species of large branch grafted on the river. On the right bank, the belt sewer will form the trunk of this branch, the secondary ducts will form the branches, and those without exit the twigs.

This figure is but a summary one and half exact, the right angle, which is the customary angle of this species of subterranean ramifications, being very rare in vegetation.

A more accurate image of this strange geometrical plan can be formed by supposing that one is viewing some eccentric oriental alphabet, as intricate as a thicket, against a background of shadows, and the misshapen letters should be welded one to another in apparent confusion, and as at haphazard, now by their angles, again by their extremities.

Sinks and sewers played a great part in the Middle Ages, in the Lower Empire and in the Orient of old. The masses regarded these beds of decomposition, these monstrous cradles of death, with a fear that was almost religious. The vermin ditch of Benares is no less conducive to giddiness than the lions' ditch of Babylon. Teglath-Phalasar, according to the rabbinical books, swore by the sink of Nineveh. It was from the sewer of Münster that John of Leyden produced his false moon, and it was from the cess-pool of Kekscheb that oriental menalchme, Mokanna, the veiled prophet of Khorassan, caused his false sun to emerge.

The history of men is reflected in the history of sewers.

The Gemoniæ¹ narrated Rome. The sewer of Paris has been an ancient and formidable thing. It has been a sepulchre, it has served as an asylum. Crime, intelligence, social protest, liberty of conscience, thought, theft, all that human laws persecute or have persecuted, is hidden in that hole; the *maillottins* in the fourteenth century, the *tire-laine* of the fifteenth, the Huguenots in the sixteenth, Morin's *illuminated* in the seventeenth, the *chauffeurs* [brigands] in the eighteenth. A hundred years ago, the nocturnal blow of the dagger emerged thence, the pickpocket in danger slipped thither; the forest had its cave, Paris had its sewer. Vagrancy, that Gallic *pica-ria*, accepted the sewer as the adjunct of the Cour des Miracles, and at evening, it returned thither, fierce and sly through the Maubué outlet, as into a bed-chamber.

It was quite natural, that those who had the blind-alley Vide-Gousset, [Empty-Pocket] or the Rue Coupe-Gorge [Cut-Throat], for the scene of their daily labor, should have for their domicile by night the culvert of the Chemin-Vert, or the catch basin of Hurepoix. Hence a throng of souvenirs. All sorts of phantoms haunt these long, solitary corridors; everywhere is putrescence and miasma; here and there are breathing-holes, where Villon within converses with Rabelais without.

The sewer in ancient Paris, is the rendez-vous of all exhaustions and of all attempts. Political economy therein spies a detritus, social philosophy there beholds a residuum.

The sewer is the conscience of the city. Everything there converges and confronts everything else. In that livid spot there are shades, but there are no longer any secrets. Each thing bears its true form, or at least, its definitive form. The mass of filth has this in its favor, that it is not a liar. Ingenuousness has taken refuge there. The mask of Basil is to be found there, but one beholds its cardboard and its strings and the inside as well as the outside, and it is accentuated by honest mud. Scapin's false nose is its next-door neighbor. All the uncleannesses of civilization, once past their use, fall into this trench of truth, where the immense social sliding ends. They are there engulfed, but they display themselves there. This mixture is a confession. There, no more false appearances, no plastering over is possible, filth removes its shirt, absolute denudation puts to the rout all illusions and mirages, there is nothing more except what

¹ Steps on the Aventine Hill, leading to the Tiber, to which the bodies of executed criminals were dragged by hooks to be thrown into the Tiber.

really exists, presenting the sinister form of that which is coming to an end. There, the bottom of a bottle indicates drunkenness, a basket-handle tells a tale of domesticity; there the core of an apple which has entertained literary opinions becomes an apple-core once more; the effigy on the big sou becomes frankly covered with verdigris, Caiphas' spittle meets Falstaff's puking, the louis-d'or which comes from the gaming-house jostles the nail whence hangs the rope's end of the suicide, a livid fœtus rolls along, enveloped in the spangles which danced at the Opera last Shrove-Tuesday, a cap which has pronounced judgment on men wallows beside a mass of rottenness which was formerly Margoton's petticoat; it is more than fraternization, it is equivalent to addressing each other as *thou*. All which was formerly rouged, is washed free. The last veil is torn away. A sewer is a cynic. It tells everything.

The sincerity of foulness pleases us, and rests the soul. When one has passed one's time in enduring upon earth the spectacle of the great airs which reasons of state, the oath, political sagacity, human justice, professional probity, the austerities of situation, incorruptible robes all assume, it solaces one to enter a sewer and to behold the mire which befits it.

This is instructive at the same time. We have just said that history passes through the sewer. The Saint Barthélemys filter through there, drop by drop, between the paving-stones. Great public assassinations, political and religious butcheries, traverse this underground passage of civilization, and thrust their corpses there. For the eye of the thinker, all historic murderers are to be found there, in that hideous penumbra, on their knees, with a scrap of their winding-sheet for an apron, dismally sponging out their work. Louis XI. is there with Tristan, François I. with Duprat, Charles IX. is there with his mother, Richelieu is there with Louis XIII., Louvois is there, Letellier is there, Hébert, and Maillard are there, scratching the stones, and trying to make the traces of their actions disappear. Beneath these vaults one hears the brooms of spectres. One there breathes the enormous fetidness of social catastrophes. One beholds reddish reflections in the corners. There flows a terrible stream, in which bloody hands have been washed.

The social observer should enter these shadows. They form a part of his laboratory. Philosophy is the microscope of the thought. Everything desires to flee from it, but

nothing escapes it. Tergiversation is useless. What side of oneself does one display in evasions? the shameful side. Philosophy pursues with its glance, probes the evil, and does not permit it to escape into nothingness. In the obliteration of things which disappear, in the watching of things which vanish, it recognizes all. It reconstructs the purple from the rag, and the woman from the scrap of her dress. From the cess-pool, it re-constitutes the city; from mud, it reconstructs manners; from the potsherd it infers the amphora or the jug. By the imprint of a finger-nail on a piece of parchment, it recognizes the difference which separates the Jewry of the Judengasse from the Jewry of the Ghetto. It re-discovers in what remains that which has been, good, evil, the true, the blood-stain of the palace, the ink-blot of the cavern, the drop of sweat from the brothel, trials undergone, temptations welcomed, orgies cast forth, the turn which characters have taken as they became abased, the trace of prostitution in souls of which their grossness rendered them capable, and on the vesture of the porters of Rome the mark of Messalina's elbowing.

III. — BRUNESAU.

THE sewer of Paris in the Middle Ages was legendary. In the sixteenth century, Henri II. attempted a bore, which failed. Not a hundred years ago, the cess-pool, Mercier attests the fact, was abandoned to itself, and fared as best it might.

Such was this ancient Paris, delivered over to quarrels, to indecision, and to gropings. It was tolerably stupid for a long time. Later on, '89 showed how understanding comes to cities. But in the good, old times, the capital had not much head. It did not know how to manage its own affairs either morally or materially, and could not sweep out filth any better than it could abuses. Everything presented an obstacle, everything raised a question. The sewer, for example, was refractory to every itinerary. One could no more find one's bearings in the sewer than one could understand one's position in the city; above the unintelligible, below the inextricable; beneath the confusion of tongues there reigned the confusion of caverns; Dædalus backed up Babel.

Sometimes the Paris sewer took a notion to overflow, as though this misunderstood Nile were suddenly seized with a fit of rage. There occurred, infamous to relate, inundations

of the sewer. At times, that stomach of civilization digested badly, the cess-pool flowed back into the throat of the city, and Paris got an after-taste of her own filth. These resemblances of the sewer to remorse had their good points; they were warnings; very badly accepted, however; the city waxed indignant at the audacity of its mire, and did not admit that the filth should return. Drive it out better.

The inundation of 1802 is one of the actual memories of Parisians of the age of eighty. The mud spread in cross-form over the Place des Victoires, where stands the statue of Louis XIV.; it entered the Rue Saint-Honoré by the two mouths to the sewer in the Champs-Élysées, the Rue Saint-Florentin through the Saint-Florentin sewer, the Rue Pierre-à-Poisson through the sewer de la Sonnerie, the Rue Popincourt, through the sewer of the Chemin-Vert, the Rue de la Roquette, through the sewer of the Rue de Lappe; it covered the drain of the Rue des Champs-Élysées to the height of thirty-five centimetres; and, to the South, through the vent of the Seine, performing its functions in inverse sense, it penetrated the Rue Mazarine, the Rue de l'Échaudé, and the Rue des Marais, where it stopped at a distance of one hundred and nine metres, a few paces distant from the house in which Racine had lived, respecting, in the seventeenth century, the poet more than the King. It attained its maximum depth in the Rue Saint-Pierre, where it rose to the height of three feet above the flag-stones of the water-spout, and its maximum length in the Rue Saint-Sabin, where it spread out over a stretch two hundred and thirty-eight metres in length.

At the beginning of this century, the sewer of Paris was still a mysterious place. Mud can never enjoy a good fame; but in this case its evil renown reached the verge of the terrible. Paris knew, in a confused way, that she had under her a terrible cavern. People talked of it as of that monstrous bed of Thebes in which swarmed centipedes fifteen long feet in length, and which might have served Behemoth for a bathtub. The great boots of the sewermen never ventured further than certain well-known points. We were then very near the epoch when the scavenger's carts, from the summit of which Sainte-Foix fraternized with the Marquis de Créqui, discharged their loads directly into the sewer. As for cleaning out, — that function was entrusted to the pouring rains which encumbered rather than swept away. Rome left some poetry to her sewer, and called it the *Gemoniæ*; Paris insulted hers, and entitled it the *Polypus-Hole*. Science and superstition were

in accord, in horror. The Polypus hole was no less repugnant to hygiene than to legend. The goblin was developed under the fetid coving of the Mouffetard sewer; the corpses of the Marmousets had been cast into the sewer de la Barillerie; Fagon attributed the redoubtable malignant fever of 1685 to the great hiatus of the sewer of the Marais, which remained yawning until 1833 in the Rue Saint-Louis, almost opposite the sign of the *Gallant Messenger*. The mouth of the sewer of the Rue de la Mortellerie was celebrated for the pestilences which had their source there; with its grating of iron, with points simulating a row of teeth, it was like a dragon's maw in that fatal street, breathing forth hell upon men. The popular imagination seasoned the sombre Parisian sink with some indescribably hideous intermixture of the infinite. The sewer had no bottom. The sewer was the lower world. The idea of exploring these leprous regions did not even occur to the police. To try that unknown thing, to cast the plummet into that shadow, to set out on a voyage of discovery in that abyss — who would have dared? It was alarming. Nevertheless, some one did present himself. The cess-pool had its Christopher Columbus.

One day, in 1805, during one of the rare apparitions which the Emperor made in Paris, the Minister of the Interior, some Decrès or Crétet or other, came to the master's intimate levee. In the Carrousel there was audible the clanking of swords of all those extraordinary soldiers of the great Republic, and of the great Empire; then Napoleon's door was blocked with heroes; men from the Rhine, from the Escaut, from the Adige, and from the Nile; companions of Joubert, of Desaix, of Marceau, of Hoche, of Kléber; the aérostiers of Fleurus, the grenadiers of Mayence, the pontoon-builders of Genoa, hussars whom the Pyramids had looked down upon, artillerists whom Junot's cannon-ball had splattered with mud, cuirassiers who had taken by assault the fleet lying at anchor in the Zuyderzee; some had followed Bonaparte upon the bridge of Lodi, others had accompanied Murat in the trenches of Mantua, others had preceded Lannes in the hollow road of Montebello. The whole army of that day was present there, in the court-yard of the Tuileries, represented by a squadron or a platoon, and guarding Napoleon in repose; and that was the splendid epoch when the grand army had Marengo behind it and Austerlitz before it. — "Sire," said the Minister of the Interior to Napoleon, "yesterday I saw the most intrepid man in your Empire." — "What man is that?" said the Emperor

brusquely, "and what has he done?"—"He wants to do something, Sire."—"What is it?"—"To visit the sewers of Paris."

This man existed and his name was Bruneseau.

IV.

THE visit took place. It was a formidable campaign; a nocturnal battle against pestilence and suffocation. It was, at the same time, a voyage of discovery. One of the survivors of this expedition, an intelligent workingman, who was very young at the time, related curious details with regard to it, several years ago, which Bruneseau thought himself obliged to omit in his report to the prefect of police, as unworthy of official style. The processes of disinfection were, at that epoch, extremely rudimentary. Hardly had Bruneseau crossed the first articulations of that subterranean network, when eight laborers out of the twenty refused to go any further. The operation was complicated; the visit entailed the necessity of cleaning; hence it was necessary to cleanse and at the same time, to proceed; to note the entrances of water, to count the gratings and the vents, to lay out in detail the branches, to indicate the currents at the point where they parted, to define the respective bounds of the divers basins, to sound the small sewers grafted on the principal sewer, to measure the height under the key-stone of each drain, and the width, at the spring of the vaults as well as at the bottom, in order to determine the arrangements with regard to the level of each water-entrance, either of the bottom of the arch, or on the soil of the street. They advanced with toil. The lanterns pined away in the foul atmosphere. From time to time, a fainting sewerman was carried out. At certain points, there were precipices. The soil had given away, the pavement had crumbled, the sewer had changed into a bottomless well; they found nothing solid; a man disappeared suddenly; they had great difficulty in getting him out again. On the advice of Fourcroy, they lighted large cages filled with tow steeped in resin, from time to time, in spots which had been sufficiently disinfected. In some places, the wall was covered with misshapen fungi,—one would have said, tumors; the very stone seemed diseased within this unbreathable atmosphere.

Bruneseau, in his exploration, proceeded down hill. At the point of separation of the two water-conduits of the Grand-Hurleur, he deciphered upon a projecting stone the date of

1550 ; this stone indicated the limits where Philibert Delorme, charged by Henri II. with visiting the subterranean drains of Paris, had halted. This stone was the mark of the sixteenth century on the sewer ; Bruneseau found the handiwork of the seventeenth century once more in the Ponceau drain of the old Rue Vielle-du-Temple, vaulted between 1600 and 1650 ; and the handiwork of the eighteenth in the western section of the collecting canal, walled and vaulted in 1740. These two vaults, especially the less ancient, that of 1740, were more cracked and decrepit than the masonry of the belt sewer, which dated from 1412, an epoch when the brook of fresh water of Ménilmontant was elevated to the dignity of the Grand Sewer of Paris, an advancement analogous to that of a peasant who should become first *valet de chambre* to the King ; something like Gros-Jean transformed into Lebel.

Here and there, particularly beneath the Court-House, they thought they recognized the hollows of ancient dungeons, excavated in the very sewer itself. Hideous *in-pace*. An iron neck-collar was hanging in one of these cells. They walled them all up. Some of their finds were singular ; among others, the skeleton of an ourang-outan, who had disappeared from the Jardin des Plantes in 1800, a disappearance probably connected with the famous and indisputable apparition of the devil in the Rue des Bernardins, in the last year of the eighteenth century. The poor devil had ended by drowning himself in the sewer.

Beneath this long, arched drain which terminated at the Arche-Marion, a perfectly preserved rag-picker's basket excited the admiration of all connoisseurs. Everywhere, the mire, which the sewermen came to handle with intrepidity, abounded in precious objects, jewels of gold and silver, precious stones, coins. If a giant had filtered this cess-pool, he would have had the riches of centuries in his lair. At the point where the two branches of the Rue du Temple and of the Rue Sainte-Avoye separate, they picked up a singular Huguenot medal in copper, bearing on one side the pig hooded with a cardinal's hat, and on the other, a wolf with a tiara on his head.

The most surprising rencounter was at the entrance to the Grand Sewer. This entrance had formerly been closed by a grating of which nothing but the hinges remained. From one of these hinges hung a dirty and shapeless rag which, arrested there in its passage, no doubt, had floated there in the darkness and finished its process of being torn apart. Brune-

seau held his lantern close to this rag and examined it. It was of very fine batiste, and in one of the corners, less frayed than the rest, they made out a heraldic coronet and embroidered above these seven letters: LAVBESP. The crown was the coronet of a Marquis, and the seven letters signified *Lau-espine*. They recognized the fact, that what they had before their eyes was a morsel of the shroud of Marat. Marat in his youth had had amorous intrigues. This was when he was a member of the household of the Comte d'Artois, in the capacity of physician to the Stables. From these love affairs, historically proved, with a great lady, he had retained this sheet. As a waif or a souvenir. At his death, as this was the only linen of any fineness which he had in his house, they buried him in it. Some old women had shrouded him for the tomb in that swaddling-band in which the tragic Friend of the people had enjoyed voluptuousness. Bruneseau passed on. They left that rag where it hung; they did not put the finishing touch to it. Did this arise from scorn or from respect? Marat deserved both. And then, destiny was there sufficiently stamped to make them hesitate to touch it. Besides, the things of the sepulchre must be left in the spot which they select. In short, the relic was a strange one. A Marquise had slept in it; Marat had rotted in it; it had traversed the Pantheon to end with the rats of the sewer. This chamber rag, of which Watteau would formerly have joyfully sketched every fold, had ended in becoming worthy of the fixed gaze of Dante.

The whole visit to the subterranean stream of filth of Paris lasted seven years, from 1805 to 1812. As he proceeded, Bruneseau drew, directed, and completed considerable works; in 1808 he lowered the arch of the Ponceau, and, everywhere creating new lines, he pushed the sewer, in 1809, under the Rue Saint-Denis as far as the fountain of the Innocents; in 1810, under the Rue Froidmanteau and under the Salpêtrière; in 1811 under the Rue Neuve-des-Petits-Pères, under the Rue du Mail, under the Rue de l'Écharpe, under the Place Royale; in 1812, under the Rue de la Paix, and under the Chaussée d'Antin. At the same time, he had the whole net-work disinfected and rendered healthful. In the second year of his work, Bruneseau engaged the assistance of his son-in-law Nargaud.

It was thus that, at the beginning of the century, ancient society cleansed its double bottom, and performed the toilet of its sewer. There was that much clean, at all events.

Tortuous, cracked, unpaved, full of fissures, intersected by gullies, jolted by eccentric elbows, mounting and descending illogically, fetid, wild, fierce, submerged in obscurity, with cicatrices on its pavements and scars on its walls, terrible,—such was, retrospectively viewed, the antique sewer of Paris. Ramifications in every direction, crossings, of trenches, branches, goose-feet, stars, as in military mines, cœcum, blind alleys, vaults lined with saltpetre, pestiferous pools, scabby sweats, on the walls, drops dripping from the ceilings, darkness; nothing could equal the horror of this old, waste crypt, the digestive apparatus of Babylon, a cavern, ditch, gulf pierced with streets, a titanic mole-burrow, where the mind seems to behold that enormous blind mole, the past, prowling through the shadows, in the filth which has been splendor.

This, we repeat, was the sewer of the past.

V.—PRESENT PROGRESS.

TODAY the sewer is clean, cold, straight, correct. It almost realizes the ideal of what is understood in England by the word “respectable.” It is proper and grayish; laid out by rule and line; one might almost say as though it came out of a bandbox. It resembles a tradesman who has become a councillor of state. One can almost see distinctly there. The mire there comports itself with decency. At first, one might readily mistake it for one of those subterranean corridors, which were so common in former days, and so useful in flights of monarchs and princes, in those good old times, “when the people loved their kings.” The present sewer is a beautiful sewer; the pure style reigns there; the classical rectilinear alexandrine which, driven out of poetry, appears to have taken refuge in architecture, seems mingled with all the stones of that long, dark and whitish vault; each outlet is an arcade; the Rue de Rivoli serves as pattern even in the sewer. However, if the geometrical line is in place anywhere, it is certainly in the drainage trench of a great city. There, everything should be subordinated to the shortest road. The sewer has, now-a-days, assumed a certain official aspect. The very police reports, of which it sometimes forms the subject, no longer are wanting in respect towards it. The words which characterize it in administrative language are sonorous and dignified. What used to be called a gut is now called a gallery; what used to be called a hole is now called a surveying orifice. Villon would no longer meet with his ancient tem-

porary provisional lodging. This net-work of cellars has its immemorial population of prowlers, rodents, swarming in greater numbers than ever; from time to time, an aged and veteran rat risks his head at the window of the sewer and surveys the Parisians; but even these vermin grow tame, so satisfied are they with their subterranean palace. The cess-pool no longer retains anything of its primitive ferocity. The rain, which, in former days soiled the sewer, now washes it. Nevertheless, do not trust yourself too much to it. Miasmas still inhabit it. It is more hypocritical than irreproachable. The prefecture of police and the commission of health have done their best. But, in spite of all the processes of disinfection, it exhales, a vague, suspicious odor like *Tartuffe* after confession.

Let us confess that, taking it all in all, this sweeping is a homage which the sewer pays to civilization, and as, from this point of view, *Tartuffe's* conscience is a progress over the Augean stables, it is certain that the sewers of Paris have been improved.

It is more than progress; it is transmutation. Between the ancient and the present sewer there is a revolution. What has effected this revolution?

The man whom all the world forgets, and whom we have mentioned, Bruneau.

VI.—FUTURE PROGRESS.

THE excavation of the sewer of Paris has been no slight task. The last ten centuries have toiled at it without being able to bring it to a termination, any more than they have been able to finish Paris. The sewer, in fact, receives all the counter-shocks of the growth of Paris. Within the bosom of the earth, it is a sort of mysterious polyp with a thousand antennæ, which expands below as the city expands above. Every time that the city cuts a street, the sewer stretches out an arm. The old monarchy had constructed only twenty-three thousand three hundred metres of sewers; that was where Paris stood in this respect on the 1st of January, 1806. Beginning with this epoch, of which we shall shortly speak, the work was usefully and energetically resumed and prosecuted; Napoleon built — the figures are curious — four thousand eight hundred and four metres; Louis XVIII., five thousand seven hundred and nine; Charles X., ten thousand eight hundred and thirty-six; Louis-Philippe, eighty-nine thousand and

twenty; the Republic of 1848, twenty-three thousand three hundred and eighty-one; the present government, seventy thousand five hundred; in all, at the present time, two hundred and twenty-six thousand six hundred and ten metres; sixty leagues of sewers; the enormous entrails of Paris. An obscure ramification ever at work; a construction which is immense and ignored.

As the reader sees, the subterranean labyrinth of Paris is today more than ten times what it was at the beginning of the century. It is difficult to form any idea of all the perseverance and the efforts which have been required to bring this cess-pool to the point of relative perfection in which it now is. It was with great difficulty that the ancient monarchical provostship and, during the last ten years of the eighteenth century, the revolutionary mayoralty, had succeeded in perforating the five leagues of sewer which existed previous to 1806. All sorts of obstacles hindered this operation, some peculiar to the soil, others inherent in the very prejudices of the laborious population of Paris. Paris is built upon a soil which is singularly rebellious to the pick, the hoe, the bore, and to human manipulation. There is nothing more difficult to pierce and to penetrate than the geological formation upon which is superposed the marvellous historical formation called Paris; as soon as work in any form whatsoever is begun and adventures upon this stretch of alluvium, subterranean resistances abound. There are liquid clays, springs, hard rocks, and those soft and deep quagmires which special science calls *moutardes*.¹ The pick advances laboriously through the calcareous layers alternating with very slender threads of clay, and schistose beds in plates incrustated with oyster-shells, the contemporaries of the pre-Adamite oceans. Sometimes a rivulet suddenly bursts through a vault that has been begun, and inundates the laborers; or a layer of marl is laid bare, and rolls down with the fury of a cataract, breaking the stoutest supporting beams like glass. Quite recently, at Villette, when it became necessary to pass the collecting sewer under the Saint-Martin canal without interrupting navigation or emptying the canal, a fissure appeared in the basin of the canal, water suddenly became abundant in the subterranean tunnel, which was beyond the power of the pumping engines; it was necessary to send a diver to explore the fissure which had been made in the narrow entrance of the grand basin, and it was not without great difficulty that it was

¹ Mustards.

stopped up. Elsewhere near the Seine, and even at a considerable distance from the river, as for instance, at Belleville, Grand-Rue and Lumière Passage, quicksands are encountered in which one sticks fast, and in which a man sinks visibly. Add suffocation by miasmas, burial by slides, and sudden crumbling of the earth. Add the typhus, with which the workmen become slowly impregnated. In our own day, after having excavated the gallery of Clichy, with a banquette to receive the principal water-conduit of Ourcq, a piece of work which was executed in a trench ten metres deep; after having, in the midst of land-slides, and with the aid of excavations, often putrid, and of shoring up, vaulted the Bièvre from the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, as far as the Seine; after having, in order to deliver Paris from the floods of Montmartre and in order to provide an outlet for that river-like pool nine hectares in extent, which crouched near the Barrière des Martyrs, after having, let us state, constructed the line of sewers from the Barrière Blanche to the road of Aubervilliers, in four months, working day and night, at a depth of eleven metres; after having — a thing heretofore unseen — made a subterranean sewer in the Rue Barre-du-Bec, without a trench, six metres below the surface, the superintendent, Monnot, died. After having vaulted three thousand metres of sewer in all quarters of the city, from the Rue Traversière-Saint-Antoine to the Rue de l'Ourcine, after having freed the Carrefour Censier-Mouffetard from inundations of rain by means of the branch of the Arbalète, after having built the Saint-Georges sewer, on rock and concrete in the fluid sands, after having directed the formidable lowering of the flooring of the vault timber in the Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth branch, Duleau the engineer died. There are no bulletins for such acts of bravery as these, which are more useful, nevertheless, than the brutal slaughter of the field of battle.

The sewers of Paris in 1832, were far from being what they are today. Bruneseau had given the impulse, but the cholera was required to bring about the vast reconstruction which took place later on. It is surprising to say, for example, that in 1821, a part of the belt sewer, called the Grand Canal, as in Venice, still stood stagnating uncovered to the sky, in the Rue des Gourdes. It was only in 1821 that the city of Paris found in its pocket the two hundred and sixty-six thousand eighty francs and six centimes required for covering this mass of filth. The three absorbing wells, of the Combat, the Cunette, and Saint-Mandé, with their discharging mouths, their appa-

tus, their cess-pools, and their depuratory branches, only date from 1836. The intestinal sewer of Paris has been made over anew, and, as we have said, it has been extended more than tenfold within the last quarter of a century.

Thirty years ago, at the epoch of the insurrection of the 5th and 6th of June, it was still, in many localities, nearly the same ancient sewer. A very great number of streets, which are now convex were then sunken causeways. At the end of a slope, where the tributaries of a street or cross-roads ended, there were often to be seen large, square gratings with heavy bars, whose iron, polished by the footsteps of the throng, gleamed dangerous and slippery for vehicles, and caused horses to fall. The official language of the Roads and Bridges gave to these gratings the expressive name of *Cassis*.¹

In 1832, in a number of streets, in the Rue de l'Étoile, the Rue Saint-Louis, the Rue du Temple, the Rue Vielle-du-Temple, the Rue Notre-Dame de Nazareth, the Rue Folie-Méricourt, the Quai aux Fleurs, the Rue du Petit-Musc, the Rue du Normandie, the Rue Pont-Aux-Biches, the Rue des Marais, the Faubourg Saint-Martin, the Rue Notre Dame des Victoires, the Faubourg Montmartre, the Rue Grange-Batelière, in the Champs-Élysées, the Rue Jacob, the Rue de Tournon, the ancient gothic sewer still cynically displayed its maw. It consisted of enormous voids of stone catch-basins sometimes surrounded by stone posts, with monumental effrontery.

Paris in 1806 still had nearly the same sewers numerically as stated in 1663; five thousand three hundred fathoms. After Bruneseau, on the 1st of January, 1832, it had forty thousand three hundred metres. Between 1806 and 1831, there had been built, on an average, seven hundred and fifty metres annually, afterwards eight and even ten thousand metres of galleries were constructed every year, in masonry, of small stones, with hydraulic mortar which hardens under water, on a cement foundation. At two hundred francs the metre, the sixty leagues of Paris' sewers of the present day represent forty-eight millions.

In addition to the economic progress which we have indicated at the beginning, grave problems of public hygiene are connected with that immense question: the sewers of Paris.

Paris is the centre of two sheets, a sheet of water and a sheet of air. The sheet of water, lying at a tolerably great depth underground, but already sounded by two bores, is furnished by the layer of green clay situated between the chalk

¹ From *casser*, to break: break-necks.

and the Jurassic lime-stone; this layer may be represented by a disk five and twenty leagues in circumference; a multitude of rivers and brooks ooze there; one drinks the Seine, the Marne, the Yonne, the Oise, the Aisne, the Cher, the Vienne and the Loire in a glass of water from the well of Grenelle. The sheet of water is healthy, it comes from heaven in the first place and next from the earth; the sheet of air is unhealthy, it comes from the sewer. All the miasms of the cess-pool are mingled with the breath of the city; hence this bad breath. The air taken from above a dung-heap, as has been scientifically proved, is purer than the air taken from above Paris. In a given time, with the aid of progress, mechanisms become perfected, and as light increases, the sheet of water will be employed to purify the sheet of air; that is to say, to wash the sewer. The reader knows, that by "washing the sewer" we mean: the restitution of the filth to the earth; the return to the soil of dung and of manure to the fields. Through this simple act, the entire social community will experience a diminution of misery and an augmentation of health. At the present hour, the radiation of diseases from Paris extends to fifty leagues around the Louvre, taken as the hub of this pestilential wheel.

We might say that, for ten centuries, the cess-pool has been the disease of Paris. The sewer is the blemish which Paris has in her blood. The popular instinct has never been deceived in it. The occupation of sewerman was formerly almost as perilous, and almost as repugnant to the people, as the occupation of knacker, which was so long held in horror and handed over to the executioner. High wages were necessary to induce a mason to disappear in that fetid mine; the ladder of the cess-pool cleaner hesitated to plunge into it; it was said, in proverbial form: "to descend into the sewer is to enter the grave;" and all sorts of hideous legends, as we have said, covered this colossal sink with terror; a dread sink-hole which bears the traces of the revolutions of the globe as of the revolutions of man, and where are to be found vestiges of all cataclysms from the shells of the Deluge to the rag of Marat.

BOOK THIRD. — MUD BUT THE SOUL.

I. — THE SEWER AND ITS SURPRISES.

It was in the sewers of Paris that Jean Valjean found himself.

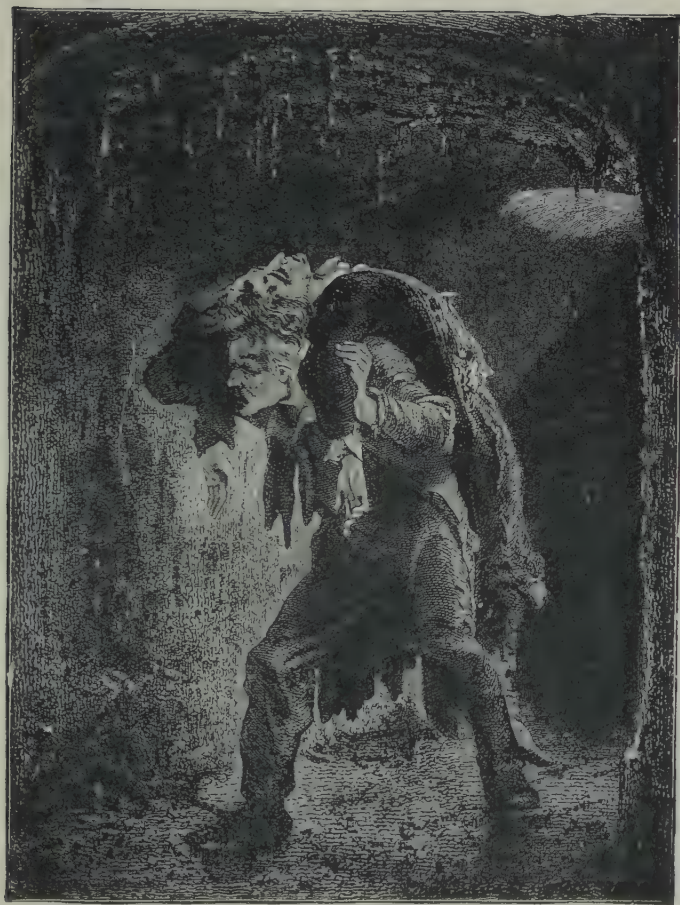
Still another resemblance between Paris and the sea. As in the ocean, the diver may disappear there.

The transition was an unheard-of one. In the very heart of the city, Jean Valjean had escaped from the city, and, in the twinkling of an eye, in the time required to lift the cover and to replace it, he had passed from broad daylight to complete obscurity, from midday to midnight, from tumult to silence, from the whirlwind of thunders to the stagnation of the tomb, and, by a vicissitude far more tremendous even than that of the Rue Polonceau, from the most extreme peril to the most absolute obscurity.

An abrupt fall into a cavern ; a disappearance into the secret trap-door of Paris ; to quit that street where death was on every side, for that sort of sepulchre where there was life, was a strange instant. He remained for several seconds as though bewildered ; listening, stupefied. The waste-trap of safety had suddenly yawned beneath him. Celestial goodness had, in a manner, captured him by treachery. Adorable ambuscades of providence !

Only, the wounded man did not stir, and Jean Valjean did not know whether that which he was carrying in that grave was a living being or a dead corpse.

His first sensation was one of blindness. All of a sudden, he could see nothing. It seemed to him too, that, in one instant, he had become deaf. He no longer heard anything. The frantic storm of murder which had been let loose a few feet above his head, did not reach him, thanks to the thickness of the earth which separated him from it, as we have said, otherwise than faintly and indistinctly, and like a rumbling, in the depths. He felt that the ground was solid under his feet ; that was all ; but that was enough. He extended one arm and then the other, touched the walls on both sides, and perceived that the passage was narrow ; he slipped, and thus perceived that the pavement was wet. He cautiously put forward one foot, fearing a hole, a sink, some gulf ; he discovered that the paving continued. A gust of fetidness informed him of the place in which he stood.



JEAN VALJEAN

After the lapse of a few minutes, he was no longer blind. A little light fell through the man-hole through which he had descended, and his eyes became accustomed to this cavern. He began to distinguish something. The passage in which he had burrowed — no other word can better express the situation — was walled in behind him. It was one of those blind alleys, which the special jargon terms branches. In front of him there was another wall, a wall like night. The light of the air-hole died out ten or twelve paces from the point where Jean Valjean stood, and barely cast a wan pallor on a few metres of the damp walls of the sewer. Beyond, the opaqueness was massive; to penetrate thither seemed horrible, and entrance into it appeared like an engulfment. A man could, however, plunge into that wall of fog and it was necessary so to do. Haste was even requisite. It occurred to Jean Valjean that the grating which he had caught sight of under the flag-stones, might also catch the eye of the soldiery, and that everything hung upon this chance. They also might descend into that well and search it. There was not a minute to be lost. He had deposited Marius on the ground, he picked him up again, — that is the real word for it, — placed him on his shoulders once more, and set out. He plunged resolutely into the gloom.

The truth is, that they were less safe than Jean Valjean fancied. Perils of another sort and no less serious were awaiting them, perchance. After the lightning-charged whirlwind of the combat, the cavern of miasmas and traps; after chaos, the sewer. Jean Valjean had fallen from one circle of hell into another.

When he had advanced fifty paces, he was obliged to halt. A problem presented itself. The passage terminated in another gut which he encountered across his path. There two ways presented themselves. Which should he take? Ought he to turn to the left or to the right? How was he to find his bearings in that black labyrinth? This labyrinth, to which we have already called the reader's attention, has a clue, which is its slope. To follow to the slope is to arrive at the river.

This Jean Valjean instantly comprehended.

He said to himself that he was probably, in the sewer des Halles; that if he were to choose the path to the left and follow the slope, he would arrive, in less than a quarter of an hour, at some mouth on the Seine between the Pont au Change and the Pont-Neuf, that is to say, he would make his appear-

ance in broad daylight on the most densely peopled spot in Paris. Perhaps he would come out on some man-hole at the intersection of streets. Amazement of the passers-by at beholding two bleeding men emerge from the earth at their feet. Arrival of the police, a call to arms of the neighboring post of guards. Thus they would be seized before they had even got out. It would be better to plunge into that labyrinth, to confide themselves to that black gloom, and to trust to Providence for the outcome.

He ascended the incline, and turned to the right.

When he had turned the angle of the gallery, the distant glimmer of an air-hole disappeared, the curtain of obscurity fell upon him once more, and he became blind again. Nevertheless, he advanced as rapidly as possible. Marius' two arms were passed round his neck, and the former's feet dragged behind him. He held both these arms with one hand, and groped along the wall with the other. Marius' cheek touched his, and clung there, bleeding. He felt a warm stream which came from Marius trickling down upon him and making its way under his clothes. But a humid warmth near his ear, which the mouth of the wounded man touched, indicated respiration, and consequently, life. The passage along which Jean Valjean was now proceeding was not so narrow as the first. Jean Valjean walked through it with considerable difficulty. The rain of the preceding day had not, as yet, entirely run off, and it created a little torrent in the centre of the bottom, and he was forced to hug the wall in order not to have his feet in the water.

Thus he proceeded in the gloom. He resembled the beings of the night groping in the invisible and lost beneath the earth in veins of shadow.

Still, little by little, whether it was that the distant air-holes emitted a little wavering light in this opaque gloom, or whether his eyes had become accustomed to the obscurity, some vague vision returned to him, and he began once more to gain a confused idea, now of the wall which he touched, now of the vault beneath which he was passing. The pupil dilates in the dark, and the soul dilates in misfortune and ends by finding God there.

It was not easy to direct his course.

The line of the sewer re-echoes, so to speak, the line of the streets which lie above it. There were then in Paris two thousand, two hundred streets. Let the reader imagine himself beneath that forest of gloomy branches which is called

the sewer. The system of sewers existing at that epoch, placed end to end, would have given a length of eleven leagues. We have said above, that the actual network, thanks to the special activity of the last thirty years, was no less than sixty leagues in extent.

Jean Valjean began by committing a blunder. He thought that he was beneath the Rue Saint-Denis, and it was a pity that it was not so. Under the Rue Saint-Denis there is an old stone sewer which dates from Louis XIII. and which runs straight to the collecting sewer, called the Grand Sewer, with but a single elbow, on the right, on the elevation of the ancient Cour des Miracles, and a single branch, the Saint-Martin sewer, whose four arms describe a cross. But the gut of the Petite-Truanderie the entrance to which was in the vicinity of the Corinthe wine-shop has never communicated with the sewer of the Rue Saint-Denis; it ended at the Montmartre sewer, and it was in this that Jean Valjean was entangled. There opportunities of losing oneself abound. The Montmartre sewer is one of the most labyrinthine of the ancient network. Fortunately, Jean Valjean had left behind him the sewer of the markets whose geometrical plan presents the appearance of a multitude of parrots' roosts piled on top of each other; but he had before him more than one embarrassing encounter and more than one street corner—for they are streets—presenting itself in the gloom like an interrogation point; first, on his left, the vast sewer of the Plâtrière, a sort of Chinese puzzle, thrusting out and entangling its chaos of Ts and Zs under the Post-Office and under the rotunda of the Wheat Market, as far as the Seine, where it terminates in a Y; secondly, on his right, the curving corridor of the Rue du Cadran with its three teeth, which are also blind courts; thirdly, on his left, the branch of the Mail, complicated, almost at its inception, with a sort of fork, and proceeding from zig-zag to zig-zag until it ends in the grand crypt of the outlet of the Louvre, truncated and ramified in every direction; and lastly, the blind alley of a passage of the Rue des Jeûneurs, without counting little ducts here and there, before reaching the belt sewer, which alone could conduct him to some issue sufficiently distant to be safe.

Had Jean Valjean had any idea of all that we have here pointed out, he would speedily have perceived, merely by feeling the wall, that he was not in the subterranean gallery of the Rue Saint-Denis. Instead of the ancient stone, instead of the antique architecture, haughty and royal even in the sewer,

with pavement and string courses of granite and mortar costing eight hundred livres the fathom, he would have felt under his hand contemporary cheapness, economical expedients, porous stone filled with mortar on a concrete foundation, which costs two hundred francs the metre, and the bourgeois masonry known as *à petits matériaux*—small stuff; but of all this he knew nothing.

He advanced with anxiety, but with calmness, seeing nothing, knowing nothing, buried in chance, that is to say, engulfed in providence.

By degrees, we will admit, a certain horror seized upon him. The gloom which enveloped him penetrated his spirit. He walked in an enigma. This aqueduct of the sewer is formidable; it interlaces in a dizzy fashion. It is a melancholy thing to be caught in this Paris of shadows. Jean Valjean was obliged to find and even to invent his route without seeing it. In this unknown, every step that he risked might be his last. How was he to get out? should he find an issue? should he find it in time? would that colossal subterranean sponge with its stone cavities, allow itself to be penetrated and pierced? should he there encounter some unexpected knot in the darkness? should he arrive at the inextricable and the impassable? would Marius die there of hemorrhage, and he of hunger? should they end by both getting lost, and by furnishing two skeletons in a nook of that night? He did not know. He put all these questions to himself without replying to them. The intestines of Paris form a precipice. Like the prophet, he was in the belly of the monster.

All at once, he had a surprise. At the most unforeseen moment, and without having ceased to walk in a straight line, he perceived that he was no longer ascending; the water of the rivulet was beating against his heels, instead of meeting him at his toes. The sewer was now descending. Why? Was he about to arrive suddenly at the Seine? This danger was a great one, but the peril of retreating was still greater. He continued to advance.

It was not towards the Seine that he was proceeding. The ridge which the soil of Paris forms on its right bank empties one of its water-sheds into the Seine and the other into the Grand Sewer. The crest of this ridge which determines the division of the waters describes a very capricious line. The culminating point, which is the point of separation of the currents, is in the Sainte-Avoye sewer, beyond the Rue Michelle-Comte, in the sewer of the Louvre, near the boulevards, and

in the Montmartre sewer, near the Halles. It was this culminating point that Jean Valjean had reached. He was directing his course towards the belt sewer; he was on the right path. But he did not know it.

Every time that he encountered a branch, he felt of its angles, and if he found that the opening which presented itself was smaller than the passage in which he was, he did not enter but continued his route, rightly judging that every narrower way must needs terminate in a blind alley, and could only lead him further from his goal, that is to say, the outlet. Thus he avoided the quadruple trap which was set for him in the darkness by the four labyrinths which we have just enumerated.

At a certain moment, he perceived that he was emerging from beneath the Paris which was petrified by the uprising, where the barricades had suppressed circulation, and that he was entering beneath the living and normal Paris. Overhead he suddenly heard a noise as of thunder, distant but continuous. It was the rumbling of vehicles.

He had been walking for about half an hour, at least according to the calculation which he made in his own mind, and he had not yet thought of rest; he had merely changed the hand with which he was holding Marius. The darkness was more profound than ever, but its very depth reassured him.

All at once, he saw his shadow in front of him. It was outlined on a faint, almost indistinct reddish glow, which vaguely empurpled the flooring vault underfoot, and the vault overhead, and gilded to his right and to his left the two viscous walls of the passage. Stupefied, he turned round.

Behind him, in the portion of the passage which he had just passed through, at a distance which appeared to him immense, piercing the dense obscurity, flamed a sort of horrible star which had the air of surveying him.

It was the gloomy star of the police which was rising in the sewer.

In the rear of that star eight or ten forms were moving about in a confused way, black, upright, indistinct, horrible.

II. — EXPLANATION.

ON the day of the sixth of June, a battue of the sewers had been ordered. It was feared that the vanquished might have taken to them for refuge, and Prefect Gisquet was to search occult Paris while General Bugeaud swept public Paris; a

double and connected operation which exacted a double strategy on the part of the public force, represented above by the army and below by the police. Three squads of agents and sewer-men explored the subterranean drain of Paris, the first on the right bank, the second on the left bank, the third in the city. The agents of police were armed with carabines, with bludgeons, swords and poignards.

That which was directed at Jean Valjean at that moment, was the lantern of the patrol of the right bank.

This patrol had just visited the curving gallery and the three blind alleys which lie beneath the Rue du Cadran. While they were passing their lantern through the depths of these blind alleys, Jean Valjean had encountered on his path the entrance to the gallery, had perceived that it was narrower than the principal passage and had not penetrated thither. He had passed on. The police, on emerging from the gallery du Cadran, had fancied that they heard the sound of footsteps in the direction of the belt sewer. They were, in fact, the steps of Jean Valjean. The sergeant in command of the patrol had raised his lantern, and the squad had begun to gaze into the mist in the direction whence the sound proceeded.

This was an indescribable moment for Jean Valjean.

Happily, if he saw the lantern well, the lantern saw him but ill. It was light and he was shadow. He was very far off, and mingled with the darkness of the place. He hugged the wall and halted. Moreover, he did not understand what it was that was moving behind him. The lack of sleep and food, and his emotions had caused him also to pass into the state of a visionary. He beheld a gleam, and around that gleam, forms. What was it? He did not comprehend.

Jean Valjean having paused, the sound ceased.

The men of the patrol listened, and heard nothing, they looked and saw nothing. They held a consultation.

There existed at that epoch at this point of the Montmartre sewer a sort of cross-roads called *de service*, which was afterwards suppressed, on account of the little interior lake which formed there, swallowing up the torrent of rain in heavy storms. The patrol could form a cluster in this open space. Jean Valjean saw these spectres form a sort of circle. These bull-dogs' heads approached each other closely and whispered together.

The result of this council held by the watch dogs was, that they had been mistaken, that there had been no noise, that it was useless to get entangled in the belt sewer, that it would

only be a waste of time, but that they ought to hasten towards Saint-Merry; that if there was anything to do, and any "bousingot" to track out, it was in that quarter.

From time to time, parties re-sole their old insults. In 1832, the word bousingot formed the interim between the word jacobin, which had become obsolete, and the word demagogue which has since rendered such excellent service.

The sergeant gave orders to turn to the left, towards the watershed of the Seine.

If it had occurred to them to separate into two squads, and to go in both directions, Jean Valjean would have been captured. All hung on that thread. It is probable that the instructions of the prefecture, foreseeing a possibility of combat and insurgents in force, had forbidden the patrol to part company. The patrol resumed its march, leaving Jean Valjean behind it. Of all this movement, Jean Valjean perceived nothing, except the eclipse of the lantern which suddenly wheeled round.

Before taking his departure, the sergeant, in order to acquit his policeman's conscience, discharged his gun in the direction of Jean Valjean. The detonation rolled from echo to echo in the crypt, like the rumbling of that titanic entrail. A bit of plaster which fell into the stream and splashed up the water a few paces away from Jean Valjean, warned him that the ball had struck the arch over his head.

Slow and measured steps resounded for some time on the timber work, gradually dying away as they retreated to a greater distance; the group of black forms vanished, a glimmer of light oscillated and floated, communicating to the vault a reddish glow which grew fainter, then disappeared; the silence became profound once more, the obscurity became complete, blindness and deafness resumed possession of the shadows; and Jean Valjean, not daring to stir as yet, remained for a long time leaning with his back against the wall, with straining ears, and dilated pupils, watching the disappearance of that phantom patrol.

III. — THE "SPUN" MAN.

THIS justice must be rendered to the police of that period, that even in the most serious public junctures, it imperturbably fulfilled its duties connected with the sewers and surveillance. A revolt was, in its eyes, no pretext for allowing malefactors to take the bit in their own mouths, and for neglecting society

for the reason that the government was in peril. The ordinary service was performed correctly in company with the extraordinary service, and was not troubled by the latter. In the midst of an incalculable political event already begun, under the pressure of a possible revolution, a police agent "spun" a thief without allowing himself to be distracted by insurrection and barricades.

It was something precisely parallel which took place on the afternoon of the 6th of June on the banks of the Seine, on the slope of the right shore, a little beyond the Pont des Invalides.

There is no longer any bank there now. The aspect of the locality has changed.

On that bank, two men, separated by a certain distance, seemed to be watching each other while mutually avoiding each other. The one who was in advance was trying to get away, the one in the rear was trying to overtake the other.

It was like a game of checkers played at a distance and in silence. Neither seemed to be in any hurry, and both walked slowly, as though each of them feared by too much haste to make his partner redouble his pace.

One would have said that it was an appetite following its prey, and purposely without wearing the air of doing so. The prey was crafty and on its guard.

The proper relations between the hunted pole-cat and the hunting dog were observed. The one who was seeking to escape had an insignificant mien and not an impressive appearance; the one who was seeking to seize him was rude of aspect, and must have been rude to encounter.

The first, conscious that he was the more feeble, avoided the second; but he avoided him in a manner which was deeply furious; any one who could have observed him would have discerned in his eyes the sombre hostility of flight, and all the menace that fear contains.

The shore was deserted; there were no passers-by; not even a boatman nor a lighter-man was in the skiffs which were moored here and there.

It was not easy to see these two men, except from the quay opposite, and to any person who had scrutinized them at that distance, the man who was in advance would have appeared like a bristling, tattered, and equivocal being, who was uneasy and trembling beneath a ragged blouse, and the other like a classic and official personage, wearing the frock-coat of authority buttoned to the chin.

Perchance the reader might recognize these two men, if he were to see them closer at hand.

What was the object of the second man ?

Probably to succeed in clothing the first more warmly.

When a man clothed by the state pursues a man in rags, it is in order to make of him a man who is also clothed by the state. Only, the whole question lies in the color. To be dressed in blue is glorious ; to be dressed in red is disagreeable.

There is a purple from below.

It is probably some unpleasantness and some purple of this sort which the first man is desirous of shirking.

If the other allowed him to walk on, and had not seized him as yet, it was, judging from all appearances, in the hope of seeing him lead up to some significant meeting-place and to some group worth catching. This delicate operation is called "spinning."

What renders this conjecture entirely probable is that the buttoned-up man, on catching sight from the shore of a hackney-coach on the quay as it was passing along empty, made a sign to the driver ; the driver understood, evidently recognized the person with whom he had to deal, turned about and began to follow the two men at the top of the quay, at a foot-pace. This was not observed by the slouching and tattered personage who was in advance.

The hackney-coach rolled along the trees of the Champs-Élysées. The bust of the driver whip in hand, could be seen moving along above the parapet.

One of the secret instructions of the police authorities to their agents contains this article : "Always have on hand a hackney-coach, in case of emergency."

While these two men were manœuvring, each on his own side, with irreproachable strategy, they approached an inclined plane on the quay which descended to the shore, and which permitted cab-drivers arriving from Passy to come to the river and water their horses. This inclined plane was suppressed later on, for the sake of symmetry ; horses may die of thirst, but the eye is gratified.

It is probable that the man in the blouse had intended to ascend this inclined plane, with a view to making his escape into the Champs-Élysées, a place ornamented with trees, but, in return, much infested with policemen, and where the other could easily exercise violence.

This point on the quay is not very far distant from the

house brought to Paris from Moret in 1824, by Colonel Brack, and designated as "the house of François I." A guard house is situated close at hand.

To the great surprise of his watcher, the man who was being tracked did not mount by the inclined plane for watering. He continued to advance along the quay on the shore.

His position was visibly becoming critical.

What was he intending to do, if not to throw himself into the Seine?

Henceforth, there existed no means of ascending to the quay; there was no other inclined plane, no staircase; and they were near the spot, marked by the bend in the Seine towards the Pont de Jéna, where the bank, growing constantly narrower, ended in a slender tongue, and was lost in the water. There he would inevitably find himself blocked between the perpendicular wall on his right, the river on his left and in front of him, and the authorities on his heels.

It is true that this termination of the shore was hidden from sight by a heap of rubbish six or seven feet in height, produced by some demolition or other. But did this man hope to conceal himself effectually behind that heap of rubbish, which one need but skirt. The expedient would have been puerile. He certainly was not dreaming of such a thing. The innocence of thieves does not extend to that point.

The pile of rubbish formed a sort of projection at the water's edge, which was prolonged in a promontory as far as the wall of the quay.

The man who was being followed arrived at this little mound and went round it, so that he ceased to be seen by the other.

The latter, as he did not see, could not be seen; he took advantage of this fact to abandon all dissimulation and to walk very rapidly. In a few moments, he had reached the rubbish heap and passed round it. There he halted in sheer amazement. The man whom he had been pursuing was no longer there.

Total eclipse of the man in the blouse.

The shore, beginning with the rubbish heap, was only about thirty paces long, then it plunged into the water which beat against the wall of the quay. The fugitive could not have thrown himself into the Seine without being seen by the man who was following him. What had become of him?

The man in the buttoned-up coat walked to the extremity of the shore, and remained there in thought for a moment, his fists clenched, his eyes searching. All at once he smote his

brow. He had just perceived, at the point where the land came to an end and the water began, a large iron grating, low, arched, garnished with a heavy lock and with three massive hinges. This grating, a sort of door pierced at the base of the quay, opened on the river as well as on the shore. A blackish stream passed under it. This stream discharged into the Seine.

Beyond the heavy, rusty iron bars, a sort of dark and vaulted corridor could be descried. The man folded his arms and stared at the grating with an air of reproach.

As this gaze did not suffice, he tried to thrust it aside; he shook it, it resisted solidly. It is probable that it had just been opened, although no sound had been heard, a singular circumstance in so rusty a grating; but it is certain that it had been closed again. This indicated that the man before whom that door had just opened, had not a hook but a key.

This evidence suddenly burst upon the mind of the man who was trying to move the grating, and evoked from him this indignant ejaculation:

“That is too much! A government key!”

Then, immediately regaining his composure, he expressed a whole world of interior ideas by this outburst of monosyllables accented almost ironically: “Come! Come! Come! Come!”

That said, and in the hope of something or other, either that he should see the man emerge or other men enter, he posted himself on the watch behind the heap of rubbish, with the patient rage of a pointer.

The hackney-coach, which regulated all its movements on his, had, in its turn, halted on the quay above him, close to the parapet. The coachman, foreseeing a prolonged wait, encased his horses' muzzles in the bag of oats which is damp at the bottom, and which is so familiar to Parisians, to whom, be it said in parenthesis, the Government sometimes applies it. The rare passers-by on the Pont de Jéna, turned their heads, before they pursued their way, to take a momentary glance at these two motionless items in the landscape, the man on the shore, the carriage on the quay.

IV. — HE ALSO BEARS HIS CROSS.

JEAN VALJEAN had resumed his march and had not again paused.

This march became more and more laborious. The level of these vaults varies; the average height is about five feet, six

inches, and has been calculated for the stature of a man; Jean Valjean was forced to bend over, in order not to strike Marius against the vault; at every step he had to bend, then to rise, and to feel incessantly of the wall. The moisture of the stones, and the viscous nature of the timber framework furnished but poor supports to which to cling, either for hand or foot. He stumbled along in the hideous dung-heap of the city. The intermittent gleams from the air-holes only appeared at very long intervals, and were so wan that the full sunlight seemed like the light of the moon; all the rest was mist, miasma, opaqueness, blackness. Jean Valjean was both hungry and thirsty; especially thirsty; and this, like the sea, was a place full of water where a man cannot drink. His strength, which was prodigious, as the reader knows, and which had been but little decreased by age, thanks to his chaste and sober life, began to give way, nevertheless. Fatigue began to gain on him; and as his strength decreased, it made the weight of his burden increase. Marius, who was, perhaps, dead, weighed him down as inert bodies weigh. Jean Valjean held him in such a manner that his chest was not oppressed, and so that respiration could proceed as well as possible. Between his legs he felt the rapid gliding of the rats. One of them was frightened to such a degree that he bit him. From time to time, a breath of fresh air reached him through the vent-holes of the mouths of the sewer, and re-animated him.

It might have been three hours past midday when he reached the belt-sewer.

He was, at first, astonished at this sudden widening. He found himself, all at once, in a gallery where his outstretched hands could not reach the two walls, and beneath a vault which his head did not touch. The Grand Sewer, is, in fact, eight feet wide and seven feet high.

At the point where the Montmartre sewer joins the Grand Sewer, two other subterranean galleries, that of the Rue de Provence, and that of the Abattoir, form a square. Between these four ways, a less sagacious man would have remained undecided. Jean Valjean selected the broadest, that is to say, the belt-sewer. But here the question again came up — should he descend or ascend? He thought that the situation required haste, and that he must now gain the Seine at any risk. In other terms, he must descend. He turned to the left.

It was well that he did so, for it is an error to suppose that the belt-sewer has two outlets, the one in the direction of Bercy, the other towards Passy, and that it is, as its name in-

dicates, the subterranean girdle of the Paris on the right bank. The Grand Sewer, which is, it must be remembered, nothing else than the old brook of M^{én}ilmontant, terminates, if one ascends it, in a blind sack, that is to say, at its ancient point of departure which was its source, at the foot of the knoll of M^{én}ilmontant. There is no direct communication with the branch which collects the waters of Paris beginning with the Quartier Popincourt, and which falls into the Seine through the Amelot sewer above the ancient Isle Louviers. This branch, which completes the collecting sewer, is separated from it, under the Rue M^{én}ilmontant itself, by a pile which marks the dividing point of the waters, between upstream and downstream. If Jean Valjean had ascended the gallery he would have arrived, after a thousand efforts, and broken down with fatigue, and in an expiring condition, in the gloom, at a wall. He would have been lost.

In case of necessity, by retracing his steps a little way, and entering the passage of the Filles-du-Calvaire, on condition that he did not hesitate at the subterranean crossing of the Carrefour Boucherat, and by taking the corridor Saint-Louis, then the Saint-Gilles gut on the left, then turning to the right and avoiding the Saint-Sebastian gallery, he might have reached the Amelot sewer, and thence, provided that he did not go astray in the sort of F which lies under the Bastille, he might have attained the outlet on the Seine near the Arsenal. But in order to do this, he must have been thoroughly familiar with the enormous madrepore of the sewer in all its ramifications and in all its openings. Now, we must again insist that he knew nothing of that frightful drain which he was traversing; and had any one asked him in what he was, he would have answered: "In the night."

His instinct served him well. To descend was, in fact, possible safety.

He left on his right the two narrow passages which branch out in the form of a claw under the Rue Laffitte and the Rue Saint-Georges and the long, bifurcated corridor of the Chaussée d'Antin.

A little beyond an affluent, which was, probably, the Madeleine branch, he halted. He was extremely weary. A passably large air-hole, probably the man-hole in the Rue d'Anjou, furnished a light that was almost vivid. Jean Valjean, with the gentleness of movement which a brother would exercise towards his wounded brother, deposited Marius on the banquette of the sewer. Marius' blood-stained face appeared

under the wan light of the air-hole, like the ashes at the bottom of a tomb. His eyes were closed, his hair was plastered down on his temples like a painter's brushes dried in red wash; his hands hung limp and dead. A clot of blood had collected in the knot of his cravat; his limbs were cold, and blood was clotted at the corners of his mouth; his shirt had thrust itself into his wounds, the cloth of his coat was chafing the yawning gashes in the living flesh. Jean Valjean, pushing aside the garments with the tips of his fingers, laid his hand upon Marius' breast; his heart was still beating. Jean Valjean tore up his shirt, bandaged the young man's wounds as well as he was able and stopped the flowing blood; then bending over Marius, who still lay unconscious and almost without breathing, in that half light, he gazed at him with inexpressible hatred.

On disarranging Marius' garments, he had found two things in his pockets, the roll which had been forgotten there on the preceding evening, and Marius' pocketbook. He ate the roll and opened the pocketbook. On the first page he found the four lines written by Marius. The reader will recall them:

"My name is Marius Pontmercy. Carry my body to my grandfather, M. Gillenormand, Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire, No. 6, in the Marais."

Jean Valjean read these four lines by the light of the air-hole, and remained for a moment as though absorbed in thought, repeating in a low tone: "Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire, number 6, Monsieur Gillenormand." He replaced the pocketbook in Marius' pocket. He had eaten, his strength had returned to him; he took Marius up once more upon his back, placed the latter's head carefully on his right shoulder, and resumed his descent of the sewer.

The Grand Sewer, directed according to the course of the valley of Ménilmontant, is about two leagues long. It is paved throughout a notable portion of its extent.

This torch of the names of the streets of Paris, with which we are illuminating for the reader Jean Valjean's subterranean march, Jean Valjean himself did not possess. Nothing told him what zone of the city he was traversing, nor what way he had made. Only the growing pallor of the pools of light which he encountered from time to time indicated to him that the sun was withdrawing from the pavement, and that the day would soon be over; and the rolling of vehicles overhead, having become intermittent instead of continuous, then having almost ceased, he concluded that he was no longer

under central Paris, and that he was approaching some solitary region, in the vicinity of the outer boulevards, or the extreme outer quays. Where there are fewer houses and streets, the sewer has fewer air-holes. The gloom deepened around Jean Valjean. Nevertheless, he continued to advance, groping his way in the dark.

Suddenly this darkness became terrible.

V.—IN THE CASE OF SAND AS IN THAT OF WOMAN, THERE IS A FINENESS WHICH IS TREACHEROUS.

He felt that he was entering the water, and that he no longer had a pavement under his feet, but only mud.

It sometimes happens, that on certain shores of Bretagne or Scotland a man, either a traveler or a fisherman, while walking at low tide on the beach far from shore, suddenly notices that for several minutes past, he has been walking with some difficulty. The beach under foot is like pitch; his soles stick fast to it; it is no longer sand, it is bird-lime. The strand is perfectly dry, but at every step that he takes, as soon as the foot is raised, the print is filled with water. The eye, however, has perceived no change; the immense beach is smooth and tranquil, all the sand has the same aspect, nothing distinguishes the soil that is solid from that which is not solid; the joyous little cloud of sand-lice, continues to leap tumultuously under the feet of the passer-by.

The man pursues his way, he walks on, turns towards the land, endeavors to approach the shore. He is not uneasy. Uneasy about what? Only, he is conscious that the heaviness of his feet seems to be increasing at every step that he takes. All at once he sinks in. He sinks in two or three inches. Decidedly, he is not on the right road; he halts to get his bearings. Suddenly he glances at his feet; his feet have disappeared. The sand has covered them. He draws his feet out of the sand, he tries to retrace his steps, he turns back, he sinks in more deeply than before. The sand is up to his ankles, he tears himself free from it and flings himself to the left, the sand reaches to mid-leg, he flings himself to the right, the sand comes up to his knees. Then, with indescribable terror, he recognizes the fact that he is caught in a quicksand, and that he has beneath him that frightful medium in which neither man can walk nor fish can swim. He flings away his burden, if he have one, he lightens himself,

like a ship in distress; it is too late, the sand is above his knees.

He shouts, he waves his hat, or his handkerchief, the sand continually gains on him; if the beach is deserted, if the land is too far away, if the bank of sand is too ill-famed, there is no hero in the neighborhood, all is over, he is condemned to be engulfed. He is condemned to that terrible interment, long, infallible, implacable, which it is impossible to either retard or hasten, which lasts for hours, which will not come to an end, which seizes you erect, free, in the flush of health, which drags you down by the feet, which, at every effort that you attempt, at every shout that you utter, draws you a little lower, which has the air of punishing you for your resistance by a redoubled grasp, which forces a man to return slowly to earth, while leaving him time to survey the horizon, the trees, the verdant country, the smoke of the villages on the plain, the sails of the ships on the sea, the birds which fly and sing, the sun and the sky. This engulfment is the sepulchre which assumes a tide, and which mounts from the depths of the earth towards a living man. Each minute is an inexorable layer-out of the dead. The wretched man tries to sit down, to lie down, to climb; every movement that he makes buries him deeper; he straightens himself up, he sinks; he feels that he is being swallowed up; he shrieks, implores, cries to the clouds, wrings his hands, grows desperate. Behold him in the sand up to his belly, the sand reaches to his breast, he is only a bust now. He uplifts his hands, utters furious groans, clenches his nails on the beach, tries to cling fast to that ashes, supports himself on his elbows in order to raise himself from that soft sheath, and sobs frantically; the sand mounts higher. The sand has reached his shoulders, the sand reaches to his throat; only his face is visible now. His mouth cries aloud, the sand fills it; silence. His eyes still gaze forth, the sand closes them, night. Then his brow decreases, a little hair quivers above the sand; a hand projects, pierces the surface of the beach, waves and disappears. Sinister obliteration of a man.

Sometimes a rider is engulfed with his horse; sometimes the carter is swallowed up with his cart; all founders in that strand. It is shipwreck elsewhere than in the water. It is the earth drowning a man. The earth, permeated with the ocean, becomes a pitfall. It presents itself in the guise of a plain, and it yawns like a wave. The abyss is subject to these treacheries.

This melancholy fate, always possible on certain sea-

beaches, was also possible, thirty years ago, in the sewers of Paris.

Before the important works, undertaken in 1833, the subterranean drain of Paris was subject to these sudden slides.

The water filtered into certain sub-jacent strata, which were particularly friable; the foot-way, which was of flag-stones, as in the ancient sewers, or of cement on concrete, as in the new galleries, having no longer an underpinning, gave way. A fold in a flooring of this sort means a crack, means crumbling. The framework crumbled away for a certain length. This crevice, the hiatus of a gulf of mire, was called a *fontis*, in the special tongue. What is a *fontis*? It is the quicksands of the seashore suddenly encountered under the surface of the earth; it is the beach of Mont Saint-Michel in a sewer. The soaked soil is in a state of fusion, as it were; all its molecules are in suspension in soft medium; it is not earth and it is not water. The depth is sometimes very great. Nothing can be more formidable than such an encounter. If the water predominates, death is prompt, the man is swallowed up; if earth predominates, death is slow.

Can any one picture to himself such a death? If being swallowed by the earth is terrible on the seashore, what is it in a cess-pool? Instead of the open air, the broad daylight, the clear horizon, those vast sounds, those free clouds whence rains life, instead of those barks descried in the distance, of that hope under all sorts of forms, of probable passers-by, of succor possible up to the very last moment, — instead of all this, deafness, blindness, a black vault, the inside of a tomb already prepared, death in the mire beneath a cover! slow suffocation by filth, a stone box where asphyxia opens its claw in the mire and clutches you by the throat; fetidness mingled with the death-rattle; slime instead of the strand, sulfuretted hydrogen in place of the hurricane, dung in place of the ocean! And to shout, to gnash one's teeth, and to writhe, and to struggle, and to agonize, with that enormous city which knows nothing of it all, over one's head!

Inexpressible is the horror of dying thus! Death sometimes redeems his atrocity by a certain terrible dignity. On the funeral pile, in shipwreck, one can be great; in the flames as in the foam, a superb attitude is possible; one there becomes transfigured as one perishes. But not here. Death is filthy. It is humiliating to expire. The supreme floating visions are abject. Mud is synonymous with shame. It is petty, ugly, infamous. To die in a butt of Malvoisie, like Clarence, is per-

missible; in the ditch of a scavenger, like Escoubleau, is horrible. To struggle therein is hideous; at the same time that one is going through the death agony, one is floundering about. There are shadows enough for hell, and mire enough to render it nothing but a slough, and the dying man knows not whether he is on the point of becoming a spectre or a frog.

Everywhere else the sepulchre is sinister; here it is deformed.

The depth of the *fontis* varied, as well as their length and their density, according to the more or less bad quality of the sub-soil. Sometimes a *fontis* was three or four feet deep, sometimes eight or ten; sometimes the bottom was unfathomable. Here the mire was almost solid, there almost liquid. In the Lunière *fontis*, it would have taken a man a day to disappear, while he would have been devoured in five minutes by the Philippeaux slough. The mire bears up more or less, according to its density. A child can escape where a man will perish. The first law of safety is to get rid of every sort of load. Every sewerman who felt the ground giving way beneath him began by flinging away his sack of tools, or his back-basket, or his hod.

The *fontis* were due to different causes: the friability of the soil; some landslip at a depth beyond the reach of man; the violent summer rains; the incessant flooding of winter; long, drizzling showers. Sometimes the weight of the surrounding houses on a marly or sandy soil forced out the vaults of the subterranean galleries and caused them to bend aside, or it chanced that a flooring vault burst and split under this crushing thrust. In this manner, the heaping up of the Parthénon, obliterated, a century ago, a portion of the vaults of Saint-Geneviève hill. When a sewer was broken in under the pressure of the houses, the mischief was sometimes betrayed in the street above by a sort of space, like the teeth of a saw, between the paving-stones; this crevice was developed in an undulating line throughout the entire length of the cracked vault, and then, the evil being visible, the remedy could be promptly applied. It also frequently happened, that the interior ravages were not revealed by any external scar, and in that case, woe to the sewermen. When they entered without precaution into the sewer, they were liable to be lost. Ancient registers make mention of several scavengers who were buried in *fontis* in this manner. They give many names; among others, that of the sewerman who was swallowed up in

a quagmire under the man-hole of the Rue Carême-Prenant, a certain Blaise Poutrain; this Blaise Poutrain was the brother of Nicholas Poutrain, who was the last grave-digger of the cemetery called the Charnier des Innocents, in 1785, the epoch when that cemetery expired.

There was also that young and charming Vicomte d'Escoubleau, of whom we have just spoken, one of the heroes of the siege of Lerida, where they delivered the assault in silk stockings, with violins at their head. D'Escoubleau, surprised one night at his cousin's, the Duchess de Sourdis', was drowned in a quagmire of the Beautreillis sewer, in which he had taken refuge in order to escape from the Duke. Madame de Sourdis, when informed of his death, demanded her smelling-bottle, and forgot to weep, through sniffing at her salts. In such cases, there is no love which holds fast; the sewer extinguishes it. Hero refuses to wash the body of Leander. Thisbe stops her nose in the presence of Pyramus and says: "Phew!"

VI. — THE FONTIS.

JEAN VALJEAN found himself in the presence of a fontis.

This sort of quagmire was common at that period in the subsoil of the Champs-Élysées, difficult to handle in the hydraulic works and a bad preservative of the subterranean constructions, on account of its excessive fluidity. This fluidity exceeds even the inconsistency of the sands of the Quartier Saint-Georges, which could only be conquered by a stone construction on a concrete foundation, and the clayey strata, infected with gas, of the Quartier des Martyrs, which are so liquid that the only way in which a passage was effected under the gallery des Martyrs was by means of a cast-iron pipe. When, in 1836 the old stone sewer beneath the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, in which we now see Jean Valjean, was demolished for the purpose of reconstructing it, the quicksand, which forms the subsoil of the Champs Élysées as far as the Seine, presented such an obstacle, that the operation lasted nearly six months, to the great clamor of the dwellers on the riverside, particularly of those who had hotels and carriages. The work was more than unhealthy; it was dangerous. It is true that they had four months and a half of rain, and three floods of the Seine.

The fontis which Jean Valjean had encountered was caused by the downpour of the preceding day. The pavement,

badly sustained by the subjacent sand, had given way and had produced a stoppage of the water. Infiltration had taken place, a slip had followed. The dislocated bottom had sunk into the ooze. To what extent? Impossible to say. The obscurity was more dense there than elsewhere. It was a pit of mire in a cavern of night.

Jean Valjean felt the pavement vanishing beneath his feet. He entered this slime. There was water on the surface, slime at the bottom. He must pass it. To retrace his steps was impossible. Marius was dying, and Jean Valjean exhausted. Besides, where was he to go? Jean Valjean advanced. Moreover, the pit seemed, for the first few steps, not to be very deep. But in proportion as he advanced, his feet plunged deeper. Soon he had the slime up to his calves and water above his knees. He walked on, raising Marius in his arms, as far above the water as he could. The mire now reached to his knees, and the water to his waist. He could no longer retreat. This mud, dense enough for one man, could not, obviously, uphold two. Marius and Jean Valjean would have stood a chance of extricating themselves singly. Jean Valjean continued to advance, supporting the dying man, who was, perhaps, a corpse.

The water came up to his arm-pits; he felt that he was sinking; it was only with difficulty that he could move in the depth of ooze which he had now reached. The density, which was his support, was also an obstacle. He still held Marius on high, and with an unheard-of expenditure of force, he advanced still; but he was sinking. He had only his head above the water now, and his two arms holding up Marius. In the old paintings of the deluge there is a mother holding her child thus.

He sank still deeper, he turned his face to the rear, to escape the water, and in order that he might be able to breathe; anyone who had seen him in that gloom would have thought that what he beheld was a mask floating on the shadows; he caught a faint glimpse above him of the drooping head and livid face of Marius; he made a desperate effort and launched his foot forward; his foot struck something solid; a point of support. It was high time.

He straightened himself up, and rooted himself upon that point of support with a sort of fury. This produced upon him the effect of the first step in a staircase leading back to life.

The point of support, thus encountered in the mire at the supreme moment, was the beginning of the other water-shed

of the pavement, which had bent but had not given way, and which had curved under the water like a plank and in a single piece. Well built pavements form a vault and possess this sort of firmness. This fragment of the vaulting, partly submerged, but solid, was a veritable inclined plane, and, once on this plane, he was safe. Jean Valjean mounted this inclined plane and reached the other side of the quagmire.

As he emerged from the water, he came in contact with a stone and fell upon his knees. He reflected that this was but just, and he remained there for some time, with his soul absorbed in words addressed to God.

He rose to his feet, shivering, chilled, foul-smelling, bowed beneath the dying man whom he was dragging after him, all dripping with slime, and his soul filled with a strange light.

VII. — ONE SOMETIMES RUNS AGROUND WHEN ONE FANCIES THAT ONE IS DISEMBARKING.

HE set out on his way once more.

However, although he had not left his life in the fontis, he seemed to have left his strength behind him there. That supreme effort had exhausted him. His lassitude was now such that he was obliged to pause for breath every three or four steps, and lean against the wall. Once he was forced to seat himself on the banquette in order to alter Marius' position, and he thought that he should have to remain there. But if his vigor was dead, his energy was not. He rose again.

He walked on desperately, almost fast, proceeded thus for a hundred paces, almost without drawing breath, and suddenly came in contact with the wall. He had reached an elbow of the sewer, and, arriving at the turn with head bent down, he had struck the wall. He raised his eyes, and at the extremity of the vault, far, very far away in front of him, he perceived a light. This time it was not that terrible light; it was good, white light. It was daylight. Jean Valjean saw the outlet.

A damned soul, who, in the midst of the furnace, should suddenly perceive the outlet of Gehenna, would experience what Jean Valjean felt. It would fly wildly with the stumps of its burned wings, towards that radiant portal. Jean Valjean was no longer conscious of fatigue, he no longer felt Marius' weight, he found his legs once more of steel, he ran rather than walked. As he approached, the outlet became more and more distinctly defined. It was a pointed arch,

lower than the vault, which gradually narrowed, and narrower than the gallery, which closed in as the vault grew lower. The tunnel ended like the interior of a funnel; a faulty construction, imitated from the wickets of penitentiaries, logical in a prison, illogical in a sewer, and which has since been corrected.

Jean Valjean reached the outlet.

There he halted.

It certainly was the outlet, but he could not get out.

The arch was closed by a heavy grating, and the grating, which, to all appearance, rarely swung on its rusty hinges, was clamped to its stone jamb by a thick lock, which, red with rust, seemed like an enormous brick. The keyhole could be seen, and the robust latch, deeply sunk in the iron staple. The door was plainly double-locked. It was one of those prison locks which old Paris was so fond of lavishing.

Beyond the grating was the open air, the river, the daylight, the shore, very narrow but sufficient for escape. The distant quays, Paris, that gulf in which one so easily hides oneself, the broad horizon, liberty. On the right, down stream, the bridge of Jéna was discernible, on the left, upstream, the bridge of the Invalides; the place would have been a propitious one in which to await the night and to escape. It was one of the most solitary points in Paris; the shore which faces the Grand-Caillou. Flies were entering and emerging through the bars of the grating.

It might have been half-past eight o'clock in the evening. The day was declining.

Jean Valjean laid Marius down along the wall, on the dry portion of the vaulting, then he went to the grating and clenched both fists round the bars; the shock which he gave it was frenzied, but it did not move. The grating did not stir. Jean Valjean seized the bars one after the other, in the hope that he might be able to tear away the least solid, and to make of it a lever wherewith to raise the door or to break the lock. Not a bar stirred. The teeth of a tiger are not more firmly fixed in their sockets. No lever; no prying possible. The obstacle was invincible. There was no means of opening the gate.

Must he then stop there? What was he to do? What was to become of him? He had not the strength to retrace his steps, to recommence the journey which he had already taken. Besides, how was he to again traverse that quagmire whence he had only extricated himself as by a miracle? And after

the quagmire, was there not that police patrol, which assuredly could not be twice avoided? And then, whither was he to go? What direction should he pursue? To follow the incline would not conduct him to his goal. If he were to reach another outlet, he would find it obstructed by a plug or a grating. Every outlet was, undoubtedly, closed in that manner. Chance had unsealed the grating through which he had entered, but it was evident that all the other sewer mouths were barred. He had only succeeded in escaping into a prison.

All was over. Everything that Jean Valjean had done was useless. Exhaustion had ended in failure.

They were both caught in the immense and gloomy web of death, and Jean Valjean felt the terrible spider running along those black strands and quivering in the shadows. He turned his back to the grating, and fell upon the pavement, hurled to earth rather than seated, close to Marius, who still made no movement, and with his head bent between his knees. This was the last drop of anguish.

Of what was he thinking during this profound depression? Neither of himself nor of Marius. He was thinking of Cosette.

VIII. — THE TORN COAT-TAIL.

IN the midst of this prostration, a hand was laid on his shoulder, and a low voice said to him:

“Half shares.”

Some person in that gloom? Nothing so closely resembles a dream as despair. Jean Valjean thought that he was dreaming. He had heard no footsteps. Was it possible? He raised his eyes.

A man stood before him.

This man was clad in a blouse; his feet were bare; he held his shoes in his left hand; he had evidently removed them in order to reach Jean Valjean, without allowing his steps to be heard.

Jean Valjean did not hesitate for an instant. Unexpected as was this encounter, this man was known to him. The man was Thénardier.

Although awakened, so to speak, with a start, Jean Valjean, accustomed to alarms, and steeled to unforeseen shocks that must be promptly parried, instantly regained possession of his presence of mind. Moreover, the situation could not be made worse, a certain degree of distress is no longer capable of a

crescendo, and Thénardier himself could add nothing to this blackness of this night.

A momentary pause ensued.

Thénardier, raising his right hand to a level with his forehead, formed with it a shade, then he brought his eyelashes together, by screwing up his eyes, a motion which, in connection with a slight contraction of the mouth, characterizes the sagacious attention of a man who is endeavoring to recognize another man. He did not succeed. Jean Valjean, as we have just stated, had his back turned to the light, and he was, moreover, so disfigured, so bemired, so bleeding that he would have been unrecognizable in full noonday. On the contrary, illuminated by the light from the grating, a cellar light, it is true, livid, yet precise in its lividness, Thénardier, as the energetic popular metaphor expresses it, immediately "leaped into" Jean Valjean's eyes. This inequality of conditions sufficed to assure some advantage to Jean Valjean in that mysterious duel which was on the point of beginning between the two situations and the two men. The encounter took place between Jean Valjean veiled and Thénardier unmasked.

Jean Valjean immediately perceived that Thénardier did not recognize him.

They surveyed each other for a moment in that half-gloom, as though taking each other's measure. Thénardier was the first to break the silence.

"How are you going to manage to get out?"

Jean Valjean made no reply. Thénardier continued:

"It's impossible to pick the lock of that gate. But still, you must get out of this."

"That is true," said Jean Valjean.

"Well, half shares then."

"What do you mean by that?"

"You have killed that man; that's all right. I have the key."

Thénardier pointed to Marius. He went on:

"I don't know you, but I want to help you. You must be a friend."

Jean Valjean began to comprehend. Thénardier took him for an assassin.

Thénardier resumed:

"Listen, comrade. You didn't kill that man without looking to see what he had in his pockets. Give me my half. I'll open the door for you."

And half drawing from beneath his tattered blouse a huge key, he added:

"Do you want to see how a key to liberty is made? Look here."

Jean Valjean "remained stupid"—the expression belongs to the elder Corneille—to such a degree that he doubted whether what he beheld was real. It was providence appearing in horrible guise, and his good angel springing from the earth in the form of Thénardier.

Thénardier thrust his fist into a large pocket concealed under his blouse, drew out a rope and offered it to Jean Valjean.

"Hold on," said he, "I'll give you the rope to boot."

"What is the rope for?"

"You will need a stone also, but you can find one outside. There's a heap of rubbish."

"What am I to do with a stone?"

"Idiot, you'll want to sling that stiff into the river, you'll need a stone and a rope, otherwise it would float on the water."

Jean Valjean took the rope. There is no one who does not occasionally accept in this mechanical way.

Thénardier snapped his fingers as though an idea had suddenly occurred to him.

"Ah, see here, comrade, how did you contrive to get out of that slough yonder? I haven't dared to risk myself in it. Phew! you don't smell good."

After a pause he added:

"I'm asking you questions, but you're perfectly right not to answer. It's an apprenticeship against that cursed quarter of an hour before the examining magistrate. And then, when you don't talk at all, you run no risk of talking too loud. That's no matter, as I can't see your face and as I don't know your name, you are wrong in supposing that I don't know who you are and what you want. I twig. You've broken up that gentleman a bit; now you want to tuck him away somewhere. The river, that great hider of folly, is what you want. I'll get you out of your scrape. Helping a good fellow in a pinch is what suits me to a hair."

While expressing his approval of Jean Valjean's silence, he endeavored to force him to talk. He jostled his shoulder in an attempt to catch a sight of his profile, and he exclaimed, without, however, raising his tone:

"Apropos of that quagmire, you're a hearty animal. Why didn't you toss the man in there?"

Jean Valjean preserved silence.

Thénardier resumed, pushing the rag which served him as a cravat to the level of his Adam's apple, a gesture which completes the capable air of a serious man :

"After all, you acted wisely. The workmen, when they come to-morrow to stop up that hole, would certainly have found the stiff abandoned there, and it might have been possible, thread by thread, straw by straw, to pick up the scent and reach you. Some one has passed through the sewer. Who? Where did he get out? Was he seen to come out? The police are full of cleverness. The sewer is treacherous and tells tales of you. Such a find is a rarity, it attracts attention, very few people make use of the sewers for their affairs, while the river belongs to everybody. The river is the true grave. At the end of a month they fish up your man in the nets at Saint-Cloud. Well, what does one care for that? It's carrion! Who killed that man? Paris. And justice makes no inquiries. You have done well."

The more loquacious Thénardier became, the more mute was Jean Valjean.

Again Thénardier shook him by the shoulder.

"Now let's settle this business. Let's go shares. You have seen my key, show me your money."

Thénardier was haggard, fierce, suspicious, rather menacing, yet amicable.

There was one singular circumstance ; Thénardier's manners were not simple ; he had not the air of being wholly at his ease ; while affecting an air of mystery, he spoke low ; from time to time he laid his finger on his mouth, and muttered, "hush!" It was difficult to divine why. There was no one there except themselves. Jean Valjean thought that other ruffians might possibly be concealed in some nook, not very far off, and that Thénardier did not care to share with them.

Thénardier resumed :

"Let's settle up. How much did the stiff have in his bags?"

Jean Valjean searched his pockets.

It was his habit, as the reader will remember, to always have some money about him. The mournful life of expedients to which he had been condemned imposed this as a law upon him. On this occasion, however, he had been caught unprepared. When donning his uniform of a National Guardsman on the preceding evening, he had forgotten, dolefully absorbed as he was, to take his pocket-book. He had only some small change in his fob. He turned out his pocket, all

soaked with ooze, and spread out on the banquettes of the vault one louis d'or, two five-franc pieces, and five or six large sous.

Thénardier thrust out his lower lip with a significant twist of the neck.

"You knocked him over cheap," said he.

He set to feeling the pockets of Jean Valjean and Marius, with the greatest familiarity. Jean Valjean, who was chiefly concerned in keeping his back to the light, let him have his way.

While handling Marius' coat, Thénardier, with the skill of a pickpocket, and without being noticed by Jean Valjean, tore off a strip which he concealed under his blouse, probably thinking that this morsel of stuff might serve, later on, to identify the assassinated man and the assassin. However, he found no more than the thirty francs.

"That's true," said he, "both of you together have no more than that."

And, forgetting his motto: "half shares," he took all.

He hesitated a little over the large sous. After due reflection, he took them also, muttering:

"Never mind! You cut folks' throats too cheap altogether."

That done, he once more drew the big key from under his blouse.

"Now, my friend, you must leave. It's like the fair here, you pay when you go out. You have paid, now clear out."

And he began to laugh.

Had he, in lending to this stranger the aid of his key, and in making some other man than himself emerge from that portal, the pure and disinterested intention of rescuing an assassin? We may be permitted to doubt this.

Thénardier helped Jean Valjean to replace Marius on his shoulders, then he betook himself to the grating on tiptoe, and barefooted, making Jean Valjean a sign to follow him, looked out, laid his finger on his mouth, and remained for several seconds, as though in suspense; his inspection finished, he placed the key in the lock. The bolt slipped back and the gate swung open. It neither grated nor squeaked. It moved very softly.

It was obvious that this gate and those hinges, carefully oiled, were in the habit of opening more frequently than was supposed. This softness was suspicious; it hinted at furtive goings and comings, silent entrances and exits of nocturnal men, and the wolf-like tread of crime.

The sewer was evidently an accomplice of some mys-

terious band. This taciturn grating was a receiver of stolen goods.

Thénardier opened the gate a little way, allowing just sufficient space for Jean Valjean to pass out, closed the grating again, gave the key a double turn in the lock and plunged back into the darkness, without making any more noise than a breath. He seemed to walk with the velvet paws of a tiger.

A moment later, that hideous providence had retreated into the invisibility.

Jean Valjean found himself in the open air.

IX. — MARIUS PRODUCES ON SOME ONE WHO IS A JUDGE OF THE MATTER, THE EFFECT OF BEING DEAD.

HE allowed Marius to slide down upon the shore.

They were in the open air !

The miasmas, darkness, horror lay behind him. The pure, healthful, living, joyous air that was easy to breathe inundated him. Everywhere around him reigned silence, but that charming silence when the sun has set in an unclouded azure sky. Twilight had descended ; night was drawing on, the great deliverer, the friend of all those who need a mantle of darkness that they may escape from an anguish. The sky presented itself in all directions like an enormous calm. The river flowed to his feet with the sound of a kiss. The aerial dialogue of the nests bidding each other good night in the elms of the Champs-Élysées was audible. A few stars, daintily piercing the pale blue of the zenith, and visible to revery alone, formed imperceptible little splendors amid the immensity. Evening was unfolding over the head of Jean Valjean all the sweetness of the infinite.

It was that exquisite and undecided hour which says neither yes nor no. Night was already sufficiently advanced to render it possible to lose oneself at a little distance and yet there was sufficient daylight to permit of recognition at close quarters.

For several seconds, Jean Valjean was irresistibly overcome by that august and caressing serenity ; such moments of oblivion do come to men ; suffering refrains from harassing the unhappy wretch ; everything is eclipsed in the thoughts ; peace broods over the dreamer like night ; and, beneath the twilight which beams and in imitation of the sky which is illuminated, the soul becomes studded with stars. Jean Valjean could not refrain from contemplating that vast, clear

shadow which rested over him; thoughtfully he bathed in the sea of ecstasy and prayer in the majestic silence of the eternal heavens. Then he bent down swiftly to Marius, as though the sentiment of duty had returned to him, and, dipping up water in the hollow of his hand, he gently sprinkled a few drops on the latter's face. Marius' eyelids did not open; but his half-open mouth still breathed.

Jean Valjean was on the point of dipping his hand in the river once more, when, all at once, he experienced an indescribable embarrassment, such as a person feels when there is some one behind him whom he does not see.

We have already alluded to this impression, with which everyone is familiar.

He turned round.

Some one was, in fact, behind him, as there had been a short while before.

A man of lofty stature, enveloped in a long coat, with folded arms, and bearing in his right fist a bludgeon of which the leaden head was visible, stood a few paces in the rear of the spot where Jean Valjean was crouching over Marius.

With the aid of the darkness, it seemed a sort of apparition. An ordinary man would have been alarmed because of the twilight, a thoughtful man on account of the bludgeon. Jean Valjean recognized Javert.

The reader has divined, no doubt, that Thénardier's pursuer was no other than Javert. Javert, after his unlooked-for escape from the barricade, had betaken himself to the prefecture of police, had rendered a verbal account to the Prefect in person in a brief audience, had then immediately gone on duty again, which implied—the note, the reader will recollect, which had been captured on his person—a certain surveillance of the shore on the right bank of the Seine near the Champs-Élysées, which had, for some time past, aroused the attention of the police. There he had caught sight of Thénardier and had followed him. The reader knows the rest.

Thus it will be easily understood that that grating, so obligingly opened to Jean Valjean was a bit of cleverness on Thénardier's part. Thénardier intuitively felt that Javert was still there; the man spied upon has a scent which never deceives him; it was necessary to fling a bone to that sleuth-hound. An assassin, what a godsend! Such an opportunity must never be allowed to slip. Thénardier, by putting Jean Valjean outside in his stead, provided a prey for the police, forced them to relinquish his scent, made them forget him

in a bigger adventure, repaid Javert for his waiting, which always flatters a spy, earned thirty francs, and counted with certainty, so far as he himself was concerned, on escaping with the aid of this diversion.

Jean Valjean had fallen from one danger upon another.

These two encounters, this falling one after the other, from Thénardier upon Javert, was a rude shock.

Javert did not recognize Jean Valjean, who, as we have stated, no longer looked like himself. He did not unfold his arms, he made sure of his bludgeon in his fist, by an imperceptible movement, and said in a curt, calm voice:

"Who are you?"

"I."

"Who is 'I'?"

"Jean Valjean."

Javert thrust his bludgeon between his teeth, bent his knees, inclined his body, laid his two powerful hands on the shoulders of Jean Valjean, which were clamped within them as in a couple of vices, scrutinized him, and recognized him. Their faces almost touched. Javert's look was terrible.

Jean Valjean remained inert beneath Javert's grasp, like a lion submitting to the claws of a lynx.

"Inspector Javert," said he, "you have me in your power. Moreover, I have regarded myself as your prisoner ever since this morning. I did not give you my address with any intention of escaping from you. Take me. Only grant me one favor."

Javert did not appear to hear him. He kept his eyes riveted on Jean Valjean. His chin being contracted, thrust his lips upwards towards his nose, a sign of savage revery. At length he released Jean Valjean, straightened himself stiffly up without bending, grasped his bludgeon again firmly, and, as though in a dream, he murmured rather than uttered this question:

"What are you doing here? And who is this man?"

He still abstained from addressing Jean Valjean as *thou*.

Jean Valjean replied, and the sound of his voice appeared to rouse Javert:

"It is with regard to him that I desire to speak to you. Dispose of me as you see fit; but first help me to carry him home. That is all that I ask of you."

Javert's face contracted as was always the case when any one seemed to think him capable of making a concession. Nevertheless, he did not say "no."

Again he bent over, drew from his pocket a handkerchief which he moistened in the water and with which he then wiped Marius' blood-stained brow.

"This man was at the barricade," said he in a low voice and as though speaking to himself. "He is the one they called Marius."

A spy of the first quality, who had observed everything, listened to everything, and taken in everything, even when he thought that he was to die; who had played the spy even in his agony, and who, with his elbows leaning on the first step of the sepulchre, had taken notes.

He seized Marius' hand and felt his pulse.

"He is wounded," said Jean Valjean.

"He is a dead man," said Javert.

Jean Valjean replied:

"No. Not yet."

"So you have brought him hither from the barricade?" remarked Javert.

His preoccupation must indeed have been very profound for him not to insist on this alarming rescue through the sewer, and for him not to even notice Jean Valjean's silence after his question.

Jean Valjean, on his side, seemed to have but one thought. He resumed:

"He lives in the Marais, Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire, with his grandfather. I do not recollect his name."

Jean Valjean fumbled in Marius' coat, pulled out his pocket-book, opened it at the page which Marius had pencilled, and held it out to Javert.

There was still sufficient light to admit of reading. Besides this, Javert possessed in his eye the feline phosphorescence of night birds. He deciphered the few lines written by Marius, and muttered: "Gillenormand, Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire, No. 6."

Then he exclaimed: "Coachman!"

The reader will remember that the hackney-coach was waiting in case of need.

Javert kept Marius' pocket-book.

A moment later, the carriage, which had descended by the inclined plane of the watering-place, was on the shore. Marius was laid upon the back seat, and Javert seated himself on the front seat beside Jean Valjean.

The door slammed, and the carriage drove rapidly away, ascending the quays in the direction of the Bastille.

They quitted the quays and entered the streets. The coachman, a black form on his box, whipped up his thin horses. A glacial silence reigned in the carriage. Marius, motionless, with his body resting in the corner, and his head drooping on his breast, his arms hanging, his legs stiff, seemed to be awaiting only a coffin; Jean Valjean seemed made of shadow, and Javert of stone, and in that vehicle full of night, whose interior, every time that it passed in front of a street lantern, appeared to be turned lividly wan, as by an intermittent flash of lightning, chance had united and seemed to be bringing face to face the three forms of tragic immobility, the corpse, the spectre, and the statue.

X.—RETURN OF THE SON WHO WAS PRODIGAL OF HIS LIFE.

At every jolt over the pavement, a drop of blood trickled from Marius' hair.

Night had fully closed in when the carriage arrived at No. 6, Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire.

Javert was the first to alight; he made sure with one glance of the number on the carriage gate, and, raising the heavy knocker of beaten iron, embellished in the old style, with a male goat and a satyr confronting each other, he gave a violent peal. The gate opened a little way and Javert gave it a push. The porter half made his appearance yawning, vaguely awake, and with a candle in his hand.

Everyone in the house was asleep. People go to bed betimes in the Marais, especially on days when there is a revolt. This good, old quarter, terrified at the Revolution, takes refuge in slumber, as children, when they hear the Bugaboo coming, hide their heads hastily under their coverlet.

In the meantime Jean Valjean and the coachman had taken Marius out of the carriage, Jean Valjean supporting him under the armpits, and the coachman under the knees.

As they thus bore Marius, Jean Valjean slipped his hand under the latter's clothes, which were broadly rent, felt his breast and assured himself that his heart was still beating. It was even beating a little less feebly, as though the movement of the carriage had brought about a certain fresh access of life.

Javert addressed the porter in a tone befitting the government, and the presence of the porter of a factious person.

"Some person whose name is Gillenormand?"

"Here. What do you want with him?"

"His son is brought back."

"His son?" said the porter stupidly.

"He is dead."

Jean Valjean, who, soiled and tattered, stood behind Javert, and whom the porter was surveying with some horror, made a sign to him with his head that this was not so.

The porter did not appear to understand either Javert's words, or Jean Valjean's sign.

Javert continued:

"He went to the barricade, and here he is."

"To the barricade?" ejaculated the porter.

"He has got himself killed. Go waken his father."

The porter did not stir.

"Go along with you!" repeated Javert.

And he added:

"There will be a funeral here to-morrow."

For Javert, the usual incidents of the public highway were categorically classed, which is the beginning of foresight and surveillance, and each contingency had its own compartment; all possible facts were arranged in drawers, as it were, whence they emerged on occasion, in variable quantities; in the street, uproar, revolt, carnival, and funeral.

The porter contented himself with waking Basque. Basque woke Nicolette; Nicolette roused great-aunt Gillenormand.

As for the grandfather, they let him sleep on, thinking that he would hear about the matter early enough in any case.

Marius was carried up to the first floor, without any one in the other parts of the house being aware of the fact, and deposited on an old sofa in M. Gillenormand's antechamber; and while Basque went in search of a physician, and while Nicolette opened the linen-presses, Jean Valjean felt Javert touch him on the shoulder. He understood and descended the stairs, having behind him the step of Javert who was following him.

The porter watched them take their departure as he had watched their arrival, in terrified somnolence.

They entered the carriage once more, and the coachman mounted his box.

"Inspector Javert," said Jean, "grant me yet another favor."

"What is it?" demanded Javert roughly.

"Let me go home for one instant. Then you shall do whatever you like with me."

Javert remained silent for a few moments, with his chin drawn back into the collar of his great-coat, then he lowered the glass and front:

"Driver," said he, "Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7."

XI. — CONCUSSION IN THE ABSOLUTE.

THEY did not open their lips again during the whole space of their ride.

What did Jean Valjean want? To finish what he had begun; to warn Cosette, to tell her where Marius was, to give her, possibly, some other useful information, to take, if he could, certain final measures. As for himself, so far as he was personally concerned, all was over; he had been seized by Javert and had not resisted; any other man than himself in like situation, would, perhaps, have had some vague thoughts connected with the rope which Thénardier had given him, and of the bars of the first cell that he should enter; but, let us impress it upon the reader, after the Bishop, there had existed in Jean Valjean a profound hesitation in the presence of any violence, even when directed against himself.

Suicide, that mysterious act of violence against the unknown, which may contain, in a measure, the death of the soul, was impossible to Jean Valjean.

At the entrance to the Rue de l'Homme Armé, the carriage halted, the way being too narrow to admit of the entrance of vehicles. Javert and Jean Valjean alighted.

The coachman humbly represented to "monsieur l'Inspecteur," that the Utrecht velvet of his carriage was all spotted with the blood of the assassinated man, and with mire from the assassin. That is the way he understood it. He added that an indemnity was due him. At the same time, drawing his certificate book from his pocket, he begged the inspector to have the goodness to write him "a bit of an attestation."

Javert thrust aside the book which the coachman held out to him, and said:

"How much do you want, including your time of waiting and the drive?"

"It comes to seven hours and a quarter," replied the man, "and my velvet was perfectly new. Eighty francs, Mr. Inspector."

Javert drew four napoleons from his pocket and dismissed the carriage.

Jean Valjean fancied that it was Javert's intention to conduct him on foot to the post of the Blancs-Manteaux or to the post of the Archives both of which are close at hand.

They entered the street. It was deserted as usual. Javert followed Jean Valjean. They reached No. 7. Jean Valjean knocked. The door opened.

"It is well," said Javert. "Go up stairs."

He added with a strange expression, and as though he were exerting an effort in speaking in this manner:

"I will wait for you here."

Jean Valjean looked at Javert. This mode of procedure was but little in accord with Javert's habits. However, he could not be greatly surprised that Javert should now have a sort of haughty confidence in him, the confidence of the cat which grants the mouse liberty to the length of its claws, seeing that Jean Valjean had made up his mind to surrender himself and to make an end of it. He pushed open the door, entered the house, called to the porter who was in bed and who had pulled the cord from his couch: "It is I!" and ascended the stairs.

On arriving at the first floor, he paused. All sorrowful roads have their stations. The window on the landing-place, which was a sash-window, was open. As in many ancient houses, the staircase got its light from without and had a view on the street. The street-lantern, situated directly opposite, cast some light on the stairs, and thus effected some economy in illumination.

Jean Valjean, either for the sake of getting the air, or mechanically, thrust his head out of this window. He leaned out over the street. It is short, and the lantern lighted it from end to end. Jean Valjean was overwhelmed with amazement; there was no longer any one there.

Javert had taken his departure.

XII. — THE GRANDFATHER.

BASQUE and the porter had carried Marius into the drawing-room, as he still lay stretched out, motionless, on the sofa upon which he had been placed on his arrival. The doctor who had been sent for, had hastened thither. Aunt Gillenormand had risen.

Aunt Gillenormand went and came, in affright, wringing her hands and incapable of doing anything but saying: "Heavens! is it possible?" At times she added: "Everything will be covered with blood." When her first horror had passed off, a certain philosophy of the situation penetrated her mind, and took form in the exclamation: "It was bound to end in this way!" She did not go so far as: "I told you so!" which is customary on this sort of occasion. At the physician's orders, a camp bed had been prepared beside the sofa. The doctor examined Marius, and after having found that his pulse was still beating, that the wounded man had no very deep wound on his breast, and that the blood on the corners of his lips proceeded from his nostrils, he had him placed flat on the bed, without a pillow, with his head on the same level as his body, and even a trifle lower, and with his bust bare in order to facilitate respiration. Mademoiselle Gillenormand on perceiving that they were undressing Marius, withdrew. She set herself to telling her beads in her own chamber.

The trunk had not suffered any internal injury; a bullet, deadened by the pocket-book, had turned aside and made the tour of his ribs with a hideous laceration, which was of no great depth, and consequently, not dangerous. The long, underground journey had completed the dislocation of the broken collar-bone, and the disorder there was serious. The arms had been slashed with sabre cuts. Not a single scar disfigured his face; but his head was fairly covered with cuts; what would be the result of these wounds on the head? Would they stop short at the hairy cuticle, or would they attack the brain? As yet, this could not be decided. A grave symptom was that they had caused a swoon, and that people do not always recover from such swoons. Moreover, the wounded man had been exhausted by hemorrhage. From the waist down, the barricade had protected the lower part of the body from injury.

Basque and Nicolette tore up linen and prepared bandages; Nicolette sewed them, Basque rolled them. As lint was lacking, the doctor, for the time being, arrested the bleeding with layers of wadding. Beside the bed, three candles burned on a table where the case of surgical instruments lay spread out. The doctor bathed Marius' face and hair with cold water. A full pail was reddened in an instant. The porter, candle in hand, lighted them.

The doctor seemed to be pondering sadly. From time to

time, he made a negative sign with his head, as though replying to some question which he had inwardly addressed to himself.

A bad sign for the sick man are these mysterious dialogues of the doctor with himself.

At the moment when the doctor was wiping Marius' face, and lightly touching his still closed eyes with his finger, a door opened at the end of the drawing-room, and a long, pallid figure made its appearance.

This was the grandfather.

The revolt had, for the past two days, deeply agitated, enraged and engrossed the mind of M. Gillenormand. He had not been able to sleep on the previous night, and he had been in a fever all day long. In the evening, he had gone to bed very early, recommending that everything in the house should be well barred, and he had fallen into a doze through sheer fatigue.

Old men sleep lightly; M. Gillenormand's chamber adjoined the drawing-room, and in spite of all the precautions that had been taken, the noise had awakened him. Surprised at the rift of light which he saw under his door, he had risen from his bed, and had groped his way thither.

He stood astonished on the threshold, one hand on the handle of the half-open door, with his head bent a little forward and quivering, his body wrapped in a white dressing-gown, which was straight and as destitute of folds as a winding-sheet; and he had the air of a phantom who is gazing into a tomb.

He saw the bed, and on the mattress that young man, bleeding, white with a waxen whiteness, with closed eyes and gaping mouth, and pallid lips, stripped to the waist, slashed all over with crimson wounds, motionless and brilliantly lighted up.

The grandfather trembled from head to foot as powerfully as ossified limbs can tremble, his eyes, whose corneae were yellow on account of his great age, were veiled in a sort of vitreous glitter, his whole face assumed in an instant the earthy angles of a skull, his arms fell pendent, as though a spring had broken, and his amazement was betrayed by the outspreading of the fingers of his two aged hands, which quivered all over, his knees formed an angle in front, allowing, through the opening in his dressing-gown, a view of his poor bare legs, all bristling with white hairs, and he murmured:

"Marius!"

"Sir," said Basque, "Monsieur has just been brought back. He went to the barricade, and . . ."

"He is dead!" cried the old man in a terrible voice. "Ah! The rascal!"

Then a sort of sepulchral transformation straightened up this centenarian as erect as a young man.

"Sir," said he, "you are the doctor. Begin by telling me one thing. He is dead, is he not?"

The doctor, who was at the highest pitch of anxiety, remained silent.

M. Gillenormand wrung his hands with an outburst of terrible laughter.

"He is dead! He is dead! He is dead! He has got himself killed on the barricades! Out of hatred to me! He did that to spite me! Ah! You blood-drinker! This is the way he returns to me! Misery of my life, he is dead!"

He went to the window, threw it wide open as though he were stifling, and, erect before the darkness, he began to talk into the street, to the night:

"Pierced, sabred, exterminated, slashed, hacked in pieces! Just look at that, the villain! He knew well that I was waiting for him, and that I had had his room arranged, and that I had placed at the head of my bed his portrait taken when he was a little child! He knew well that he had only to come back, and that I had been recalling him for years, and that I remained by my fireside, with my hands on my knees, not knowing what to do, and that I was mad over it! You knew well, that you had but to return and to say: 'It is I,' and you would have been the master of the house, and that I should have obeyed you, and that you could have done whatever you pleased with your old numskull of a grandfather! you knew that well, and you said:

"No, he is a Royalist, I will not go! And you went to the barricades, and you got yourself killed out of malice! To revenge yourself for what I said to you about Monsieur le Duc de Berry. It is infamous! Go to bed then and sleep tranquilly! he is dead, and this is my awakening."

The doctor, who was beginning to be uneasy in both quarters, quitted Marius for a moment, went to M. Gillenormand, and took his arm. The grandfather turned round, gazed at him with eyes which seemed exaggerated in size and bloodshot, and said to him calmly:

"I thank you, sir. I am composed, I am a man, I witnessed the death of Louis XVI., I know how to bear events. One

thing is terrible and that is to think that it is your newspapers which do all the mischief. You will have scribblers, chatterers, lawyers, orators, tribunes, discussions, progress, enlightenment, the rights of man, the liberty of the press, and this is the way that your children will be brought home to you. Ah! Marius! It is abominable! Killed! Dead before me! A barricade! Ah, the scamp! Doctor, you live in this quarter, I believe? Oh! I know you well. I see your cabriolet pass my window. I am going to tell you. You are wrong to think that I am angry. One does not fly into a rage against a dead man. That would be stupid. This is a child whom I have reared. I was already old while he was very young. He played in the Tuileries garden with his little shovel and his little chair, and in order that the inspectors might not grumble, I stopped up the holes that he made in the earth with his shovel, with my cane. One day he exclaimed: Down with Louis XVIII.! and off he went. It was no fault of mine. He was all rosy and blond. His mother is dead. Have you ever noticed that all little children are blond? Why is it so? He is the son of one of those brigands of the Loire, but children are innocent of their fathers' crimes. I remember when he was no higher than that. He could not manage to pronounce his Ds. He had a way of talking that was so sweet and indistinct that you would have thought it was a bird chirping. I remember that once, in front of the Hercules Farnese, people formed a circle to admire him and marvel at him, he was so handsome, was that child! He had a head such as you see in pictures. I talked in a deep voice, and I frightened him with my cane, but he knew very well that it was only to make him laugh. In the morning, when he entered my room, I grumbled, but he was like the sunlight to me, all the same. One cannot defend oneself against those brats. They take hold of you, they hold you fast, they never let you go again. The truth is, that there never was a cupid like that child. Now, what can you say for your Lafayettes, your Benjamin Constants, and your Tirecuir de Corcelles who have killed him? This cannot be allowed to pass in this fashion."

He approached Marius, who still lay livid and motionless, and to whom the physician had returned, and began once more to wring his hands. The old man's pallid lips moved as though mechanically, and permitted the passage of words that were barely audible, like breaths in the death agony:

"Ah! heartless lad! Ah! clubbist! Ah! wretch! Ah! Septembrist!

Reproaches in the low voice of an agonizing man, addressed to a corpse.

Little by little, as it is always indispensable that internal eruptions should come to the light, the sequence of words returned, but the grandfather appeared no longer to have the strength to utter them, his voice was so weak, and extinct, that it seemed to come from the other side of an abyss:

"It is all the same to me, I am going to die too, that I am. And to think that there is not a hussy in Paris who would not have been delighted to make this wretch happy! A scamp who, instead of amusing himself and enjoying life, went off to fight and get himself shot down like a brute! And for whom? Why? For the Republic! Instead of going to dance at the Chaumière, as it is the duty of young folks to do! What's the use of being twenty years old? The Republic, a cursed pretty folly! Poor mothers, beget fine boys, do! Come, he is dead. That will make two funerals under the same carriage gate. So you have got yourself arranged like this for the sake of General Lamarque's handsome eyes! What had that General Lamarque done to you? A slasher! A chatter-box! To get oneself killed for a dead man! If that isn't enough to drive anyone mad! Just think of it! At twenty! And without so much as turning his head to see whether he was not leaving something behind him! That's the way poor, good old fellows are forced to die alone now-a-days. Perish in your corner, owl! Well, after all, so much the better, that is what I was hoping for, this will kill me on the spot. I am too old, I am a hundred years old, I am a hundred thousand years old, I ought, by rights, to have been dead long ago. This blow puts an end to it. So all is over, what happiness! What is the good of making him inhale ammonia and all that parcel of drugs? You are wasting your trouble, you fool of a doctor! Come, he's dead, completely dead. I know all about it, I am dead myself too. He hasn't done things by half. Yes, this age is infamous, infamous and that's what I think of you, of your ideas, of your systems, of your masters, of your oracles, of your doctors, of your scrape-graces of writers, of your rascally philosophers, and of all the revolutions which, for the last sixty years, have been frightening the flocks of crows in the Tuileries! But you were pitiless in getting yourself killed like this, I shall not even grieve over your death, do you understand, you assassin?"

At that moment, Marius slowly opened his eyes, and his glance, still dimmed by lethargic wonder, rested on M. Gille-normand.

"Marius!" cried the old man. "Marius! My little Marius! my child! my well-beloved son! You open your eyes, you gaze upon me, you are alive, thanks!"

And he fell fainting.



BOOK FOURTH. — JAVERT DERAILED.

I.

JAVERT passed slowly down the Rue de l'Homme Armé.

He walked with drooping head for the first time in his life, and likewise, for the first time in his life, with his hands behind his back.

Up to that day, Javert had borrowed from Napoleon's attitudes, only that which is expressive of resolution, with arms folded across the chest; that which is expressive of uncertainty — with the hands behind the back — had been unknown to him. Now, a change had taken place; his whole person, slow and sombre, was stamped with anxiety.

He plunged into the silent streets.

Nevertheless, he followed one given direction.

He took the shortest cut to the Seine, reached the Quai des Ormes, skirted the quay, passed the Grève, and halted at some distance from the post of the Place du Châtelet, at the angle of the Pont Notre-Dame. There, between the Notre-Dame and the Pont au Change on the one hand, and the Quai de la Mégisserie and the Quai aux Fleurs on the other, the Seine forms a sort of square lake, traversed by a rapid.

This point of the Seine is dreaded by mariners. Nothing is more dangerous than this rapid, hemmed in, at that epoch, and irritated by the piles of the mill on the bridge, now demolished. The two bridges, situated thus close together, augment the peril; the water hurries in formidable wise through the arches. It rolls in vast and terrible waves; it accumulates and piles up there; the flood attacks the piles of the bridges as though in an effort to pluck them up with great liquid

ropes. Men who fall in there never re-appear; the best of swimmers are drowned there.

Javert leaned both elbows on the parapet, his chin resting in both hands, and, while his nails were mechanically twined in the abundance of his whiskers, he meditated.

A novelty, a revolution, a catastrophe had just taken place in the depths of his being; and he had something upon which to examine himself.

Javert was undergoing horrible suffering.

For several hours, Javert had ceased to be simple. He was troubled; that brain, so limpid in its blindness, had lost its transparency; that crystal was clouded. Javert felt duty divided within his conscience, and he could not conceal the fact from himself. When he had so unexpectedly encountered Jean Valjean on the banks of the Seine, there had been in him something of the wolf which regains his grip on his prey, and of the dog who finds his master again.

He beheld before him two paths, both equally straight, but he beheld two; and that terrified him; him, who had never in all his life known more than one straight line. And, the poignant anguish lay in this, that the two paths were contrary to each other. One of these straight lines excluded the other. Which of the two was the true one?

His situation was indescribable.

To owe his life to a malefactor, to accept that debt and to repay it; to be, in spite of himself, on a level with a fugitive from justice, and to repay his service with another service; to allow it to be said to him, "Go," and to say to the latter in his turn: "Be free"; to sacrifice to personal motives duty, that general obligation, and to be conscious, in those personal motives, of something that was also general, and, perchance, superior, to betray society in order to remain true to his conscience; that all these absurdities should be realized and should accumulate upon him, — this was what overwhelmed him.

One thing had amazed him, — this was that Jean Valjean should have done him a favor, and one thing petrified him, — that he, Javert, should have done Jean Valjean a favor.

Where did he stand? He sought to comprehend his position, and could no longer find his bearings.

What was he to do now? To deliver up Jean Valjean was bad; to leave Jean Valjean at liberty was bad. In the first case, the man of authority fell lower than the man of the galleys, in the second, a convict rose above the law, and set his

foot upon it. In both cases, dishonor for him, Javert. There was disgrace in any resolution at which he might arrive. Destiny has some extremities which rise perpendicularly from the impossible, and beyond which life is no longer anything but a precipice. Javert had reached one of those extremities.

One of his anxieties consisted in being constrained to think. The very violence of all these conflicting emotions forced him to it. Thought, was something to which he was unused, and which was peculiarly painful.

In thought there always exists a certain amount of internal rebellion; and it irritated him to have that within him.

Thought on any subject whatever, outside of the restricted circle of his functions, would have been for him in any case useless and a fatigue; thought on the day which had just passed, was a torture. Nevertheless, it was indispensable that he should take a look into his conscience, after such shocks, and render to himself an account of himself.

What he had just done made him shudder. He, Javert, had seen fit to decide, contrary to all the regulations of the police, contrary to the whole social and judicial organization, contrary to the entire code, upon a release; this had suited him; he had substituted his own affairs for the affairs of the public; was not this unjustifiable? Every time that he brought himself face to face with this deed without a name which he had committed, he trembled from head to foot. Upon what should he decide? One sole resource remained to him; to return in all haste to the Rue de l'Homme Armé, and commit Jean Valjean to prison. It was clear that that was what he ought to do. He could not.

Something barred his way in that direction.

Something? What? Is there in the world, anything outside of the tribunals, executory sentences, the police and the authorities? Javert was overwhelmed.

A galley-slave sacred! A convict who could not be touched by the law! And that the deed of Javert!

Was it not a fearful thing that Javert and Jean Valjean, the man made to proceed with rigor, the man made to submit, — that these two men who were both the things of the law, should have come to such a pass, that both of them had set themselves above the law? What then! such enormities were to happen and no one was to be punished! Jean Valjean, stronger than the whole social order, was to remain at liberty, and he, Javert, was to go on eating the government's bread!

His reverie gradually became terrible.

He might, athwart this reverie, have also reproached himself on the subject of that insurgent who had been taken to the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire; but he never even thought of that. The lesser fault was lost in the greater. Besides, that insurgent was, obviously, a dead man, and, legally, death puts an end to pursuit.

Jean Valjean was the load which weighed upon his spirit.

Jean Valjean disconcerted him. All the axioms which had served him as points of support all his life long, had crumbled away in the presence of this man. Jean Valjean's generosity towards him, Javert, crushed him. Other facts which he now recalled, and which he had formerly treated as lies and folly, now recurred to him as realities. M. Madeleine re-appeared behind Jean Valjean, and the two figures were superposed in such fashion that they now formed but one, which was venerable. Javert felt that something terrible was penetrating his soul — admiration for a convict. Respect for a galley-slave — is that a possible thing? He shuddered at it, yet could not escape from it. In vain did he struggle, he was reduced to confess, in his inmost heart, the sublimity of that wretch. This was odious.

A benevolent malefactor, merciful, gentle, helpful, clement, a convict, returning good for evil, giving back pardon for hatred, preferring pity to vengeance, preferring to ruin himself rather than to ruin his enemy, saving him who had smitten him, kneeling on the heights of virtue, more nearly akin to an angel than to a man. Javert was constrained to admit to himself that this monster existed.

Things could not go on in this manner.

Certainly, and we insist upon this point, he had not yielded without resistance to that monster, to that infamous angel, to that hideous hero, who enraged almost as much as he amazed him. Twenty times, as he sat in that carriage face to face with Jean Valjean, the legal tiger had roared within him. A score of times he had been tempted to fling himself upon Jean Valjean, to seize him and devour him, that is to say, to arrest him. What more simple, in fact? To cry out at the first post that they passed: — "Here is a fugitive from justice, who has broken his ban!" to summon the gendarmes and say to them: "This man is yours!" then to go off, leaving that condemned man there, to ignore the rest and not to meddle further in the matter. This man is forever a prisoner of the law; the law may do with him what it will. What could be more just?

Javert had said all this to himself; he had wished to pass beyond, to act, to apprehend the man, and then, as at present, he had not been able to do it; and every time that his arm had been raised convulsively towards Jean Valjean's collar, his hand had fallen back again, as beneath an enormous weight, and in the depths of his thought he had heard a voice, a strange voice crying to him:—"It is well. Deliver up your savior. Then have the basin of Pontius Pilate brought and wash your claws."

Then his reflections reverted to himself and beside Jean Valjean glorified he beheld himself, Javert, degraded.

A convict was his benefactor!

But then, why had he permitted that man to leave him alive? He had the right to be killed in that barricade. He should have asserted that right. It would have been better to summon the other insurgents to his succor against Jean Valjean, to get himself shot by force.

His supreme anguish was the loss of certainty. He felt that he had been uprooted. The code was no longer anything more than a stump in his hand. He had to deal with scruples of an unknown species. There had taken place within him a sentimental revelation entirely distinct from legal affirmation, his only standard of measurement hitherto. To remain in his former uprightness did not suffice. A whole order of unexpected facts had cropped up and subjugated him. A whole new world was dawning on his soul: kindness accepted and repaid, devotion, mercy, indulgence, violences committed by pity on austerity, respect for persons, no more definitive condemnation, no more conviction, the possibility of a tear in the eye of the law, no one knows what justice according to God, running in inverse sense to justice according to men. He perceived amid the shadows the terrible rising of an unknown moral sun; it horrified and dazzled him. An owl forced to the gaze of an eagle.

He said to himself that it was true that there were exceptional cases, that authority might be put out of countenance, that the rule might be inadequate in the presence of a fact, that everything could not be framed within the text of the code, that the unforeseen compelled obedience, that the virtue of a convict might set a snare for the virtue of the functionary, that destiny did indulge in such ambushes, and he reflected with despair that he himself had not even been fortified against a surprise.

He was forced to acknowledge that goodness did exist. This

convict had been good. And he himself, unprecedented circumstance, had just been good also. So he was becoming depraved.

He found that he was a coward. He conceived a horror of himself.

Javert's ideal, was not to be human, to be grand, to be sublime; it was to be irreproachable.

Now, he had just failed in this.

How had he come to such a pass? How had all this happened? He could not have told himself. He clasped his head in both hands, but in spite of all that he could do, he could not contrive to explain it to himself.

He had certainly always entertained the intention of restoring Jean Valjean to the law of which Jean Valjean was the captive, and of which he, Javert, was the slave. Not for a single instant while he held him in his grasp had he confessed to himself that he entertained the idea of releasing him. It was, in some sort, without his consciousness, that his hand had relaxed and had let him go free.

All sorts of interrogation points flashed before his eyes. He put questions to himself, and made replies to himself, and his replies frightened him. He asked himself: "What has that convict done, that desperate fellow, whom I have pursued even to persecution, and who has had me under his foot, and who could have avenged himself, and who owed it both to his rancor and to his safety, in leaving me my life, in showing mercy upon me? His duty? No. Something more. And I in showing mercy upon him in my turn — what have I done? My duty? No. Something more. So there is something beyond duty?" Here he took fright; his balance became disjointed; one of the scales fell into the abyss, the other rose heavenward, and Javert was no less terrified by the one which was on high than by the one which was below. Without being the least in the world what is called Voltairian or a philosopher, or incredulous, being, on the contrary, respectful by instinct, towards the established church, he knew it only as an august fragment of the social whole; order was his dogma, and sufficed for him; ever since he had attained to man's estate and the rank of a functionary, he had centred nearly all his religion in the police. Being, — and here we employ words without the least irony and in their most serious acceptation, being, as we have said, a spy as other men are priests. He had a superior, M. Gisquet; up to that day he had never dreamed of that other superior, God.

This new chief, God, he became unexpectedly conscious of,

and he felt embarrassed by him. This unforeseen presence threw him off his bearings; he did not know what to do with this superior, he, who was not ignorant of the fact that the subordinate is bound always to bow, that he must not disobey, nor find fault, nor discuss, and that, in the presence of a superior who amazes him too greatly, the inferior has no other resource than that of handing in his resignation.

But how was he to set about handing in his resignation to God?

However things might stand, — and it was to this point that he reverted constantly, — one fact dominated everything else for him, and that was, that he had just committed a terrible infraction of the law. He had just shut his eyes on an escaped convict who had broken his ban. He had just set a galley-slave at large. He had just robbed the laws of a man who belonged to them. That was what he had done. He no longer understood himself. The very reasons for his action escaped him; only their vertigo was left with him. Up to that moment he had lived with that blind faith which gloomy probity engenders. This faith had quitted him, this probity had deserted him. All that he had believed in melted away. Truths which he did not wish to recognize were besieging him, inexorably. Henceforth, he must be a different man. He was suffering from the strange pains of a conscience abruptly operated on for the cataract. He saw that which it was repugnant to him to behold. He felt himself emptied, useless, put out of joint with his past life, turned out, dissolved. Authority was dead within him. He had no longer any reason for existing.

A terrible situation! to be touched.

To be granite and to doubt! to be the statue of Chastisement cast in one piece in the mould of the law, and suddenly to become aware of the fact that one cherishes beneath one's breast of bronze something absurd and disobedient which almost resembles a heart! To come to the pass of returning good for good, although one has said to oneself up to that day that that good is evil! to be the watch-dog, and to lick the intruder's hand! to be ice and melt! to be the pincers and to turn into a hand! to suddenly feel one's fingers opening! to relax one's grip, — what a terrible thing!

The man-projectile no longer acquainted with his route and retreating!

To be obliged to confess this to oneself: infallibility is not infallible, there may exist error in the dogma, all has not

been said when a code speaks, society is not perfect, authority is complicated with vacillation, a crack is possible in the immutable, judges are but men, the law may err, tribunals may make a mistake! to behold a rift in the immense blue pane of the firmament!

That which was passing in Javert was the Fampoux of a rectilinear conscience, the derailment of a soul, the crushing of a probity which had been irresistibly launched in a straight line and was breaking against God. It certainly was singular that the stoker of order, that the engineer of authority, mounted on the blind iron horse with its rigid road, could be unseated by a flash of light! that the immovable, the direct, the correct, the geometrical, the passive, the perfect could bend! that there should exist for the locomotive a road to Damascus!

God, always within man, and refractory, He, the true conscience, to the false; a prohibition to the spark to die out; an order to the ray to remember the sun; an injunction to the soul to recognize the veritable absolute when confronted with the fictitious absolute, humanity which cannot be lost; the human heart indestructible; that splendid phenomenon, the finest, perhaps, of all our interior marvels, did Javert understand this? Did Javert penetrate it? Did Javert account for it to himself? Evidently he did not. But beneath the pressure of that incontestable incomprehensibility he felt his brain bursting.

He was less the man transfigured than the victim of this prodigy. In all this he perceived only the tremendous difficulty of existence. It seemed to him that, henceforth, his respiration was repressed forever. He was not accustomed to having something unknown hanging over his head.

Up to this point, everything above him had been, to his gaze, merely a smooth, limpid and simple surface; there was nothing incomprehensible, nothing obscure; nothing that was not defined, regularly disposed, linked, precise, circumscribed, exact, limited, closed, fully provided for; authority was a plane surface; there was no fall in it, no dizziness in its presence. Javert had never beheld the unknown except from below. The irregular, the unforeseen, the disordered opening of chaos, the possible slip over a precipice—this was the work of the lower regions, of rebels, of the wicked, of wretches. Now Javert threw himself back, and he was suddenly terrified by this unprecedented apparition: a gulf on high.

What! one was dismantled from top to bottom! one was

disconcerted, absolutely! In what could one trust! That which had been agreed upon was giving way! What! the defect in society's armor could be discovered by a magnanimous wretch! What! an honest servitor of the law could suddenly find himself caught between two crimes — the crime of allowing a man to escape and the crime of arresting him! everything was not settled in the orders given by the State to the functionary! There might be blind alleys in duty! What, — all this was real! was it true that an ex-ruffian, weighed down with convictions, could rise erect and end by being in the right? Was this credible? were there cases in which the law should retire before transfigured crime, and stammer its excuses? — Yes, that was the state of the case! and Javert saw it! and Javert had touched it! and not only could he not deny it, but he had taken part in it. These were realities. It was abominable that actual facts could reach such deformity. If facts did their duty, they would confine themselves to being proofs of the law; facts — it is God who sends them. Was anarchy then, on the point of now descending from on high?

Thus, — and in the exaggeration of anguish, and the optical illusion of consternation, all that might have corrected and restrained this impression was effaced, and society, and the human race, and the universe were, henceforth, summed up in his eyes, in one simple and terrible feature, — thus the penal laws, the thing judged, the force due to legislation, the decrees of the sovereign courts, the magistracy, the government, prevention, repression, official cruelty, wisdom, legal infallibility, the principle of authority, all the dogmas on which rest political and civil security, sovereignty, justice, public truth, all this was rubbish, a shapeless mass, chaos; he himself, Javert, the spy of order, incorruptibility in the service of the police, the bull-dog providence of society, vanquished and hurled to earth; and, erect, at the summit of all that ruin, a man with a green cap on his head and a halo round his brow; this was the astounding confusion to which he had come; this was the fearful vision which he bore within his soul.

Was this to be endured? No.

A violent state, if ever such existed. There were only two ways of escaping from it. One was to go resolutely to Jean Valjean, and restore to his cell the convict from the galleys. The other . . .

Javert quitted the parapet, and, with head erect this time, betook himself, with a firm tread, towards the station-house

indicated by a lantern at one of the corners of the Place du Châtelet.

On arriving there, he saw through the window a sergeant of police, and he entered. Policemen recognize each other by the very way in which they open the door of a station-house. Javert mentioned his name, showed his card to the sergeant, and seated himself at the table of the post on which a candle was burning. On a table lay a pen, a leaden inkstand and paper, provided in the event of possible reports and the orders of the night patrols. This table, still completed by its straw-seated chair, is an institution; it exists in all police stations; it is invariably ornamented with a box-wood saucer filled with sawdust and a wafer-box of cardboard filled with red wafers, and it forms the lowest stage of official style. It is there that the literature of the State has its beginning.

Javert took a pen and a sheet of paper, and began to write. This is what he wrote:—

A FEW OBSERVATIONS FOR THE GOOD OF THE SERVICE.

“In the first place: I beg Monsieur le Préfet to cast his eyes on this.

“Secondly: prisoners, on arriving after examination, take off their shoes and stand barefoot on the flagstones while they are being searched. Many of them cough on their return to prison. This entails hospital expenses.

“Thirdly: the mode of keeping track of a man with relays of police agents from distance to distance, is good, but, on important occasions, it is requisite that at least two agents should never lose sight of each other, so that, in case one agent should, for any cause, grow weak in his service, the other may supervise him and take his place.

“Fourthly: it is inexplicable why the special regulation of the prison of the Madelonettes interdicts the prisoner from having a chair, even by paying for it.

“Fifthly: in the Madelonettes there are only two bars to the canteen, so that the canteen woman can touch the prisoners with her hand.

“Sixthly: the prisoners called barkers, who summon the other prisoners to the parlor, force the prisoner to pay them two sous to call his name distinctly. This is a theft.

“Seventhly: for a broken thread ten sous are withheld in

the weaving shop; this is an abuse of the contractor, since the cloth is none the worse for it.

"Eighthly: it is annoying for visitors to La Force to be obliged to traverse the boys' court in order to reach the parlor of Sainte-Marie-l'Égyptienne.

"Ninthly: it is a fact that any day gendarmes can be overheard relating in the court-yard of the prefecture the interrogations put by the magistrates to prisoners. For a gendarme, who should be sworn to secrecy, to repeat what he has heard in the examination room is a grave disorder.

"Tenthly: Mme. Henry is an honest woman; her canteen is very neat; but it is bad to have a woman keep the wicket to the mouse-trap of the secret cells. This is unworthy of the Conciergerie of a great civilization."

Javert wrote these lines in his calmest and most correct chirography, not omitting a single comma, and making the paper screech under his pen. Below the last line he signed:

"JAVERT,

"Inspector of the 1st class.

"The Post of the Place du Châtelet.

"June 7th, 1832, about one o'clock in the morning."

Javert dried the fresh ink on the paper, folded it like a letter, sealed it, wrote on the back: *Note for the administration*, left it on the table, and quitted the post. The glazed and grated door fell to behind him.

Again he traversed the Place du Châtelet diagonally, regained the quay, and returned with automatic precision to the very point which he had abandoned a quarter of an hour previously, leaned on his elbows and found himself again in the same attitude on the same paving-stone of the parapet. He did not appear to have stirred.

The darkness was complete. It was the sepulchral moment which follows midnight. A ceiling of clouds concealed the stars. Not a single light burned in the houses of the city; no-one was passing; all of the streets and quays which could be seen were deserted; Notre-Dame and the towers of the Court-House seemed features of the night. A street lantern reddened the margin of the quay. The outlines of the bridges lay shapeless in the mist one behind the other. Recent rains had swollen the river.

The spot where Javert was leaning was, it will be remembered, situated precisely over the rapids of the Seine, perpen-

dicularly above that formidable spiral of whirlpools which loose and knot themselves again like an endless screw.

Javert bent his head and gazed. All was black. Nothing was to be distinguished. A sound of foam was audible; but the river could not be seen. At moments, in that dizzy depth, a gleam of light appeared, and undulated vaguely, water possessing the power of taking light no one knows whence, and converting it into a snake. The light vanished, and all became indistinct once more. Immensity seemed thrown open there. What lay below was not water, it was a gulf. The wall of the quay, abrupt, confused, mingled with the vapors, instantly concealed from sight, produced the effect of an escarpment of the infinite. Nothing was to be seen, but the hostile chill of the water and the stale odor of the wet stones could be felt. A fierce breath rose from this abyss. The flood in the river, divined rather than perceived, the tragic whispering of the waves, the melancholy vastness of the arches of the bridge, the imaginable fall into that gloomy void, into all that shadow was full of horror.

Javert remained motionless for several minutes, gazing at this opening of shadow; he considered the invisible with a fixity that resembled attention. The water roared. All at once he took off his hat and placed it on the edge of the quay. A moment later, a tall black figure, which a belated passer-by in the distance might have taken for a phantom, appeared erect upon the parapet of the quay, bent over towards the Seine, then drew itself up again, and fell straight down into the shadows; a dull splash followed; and the shadow alone was in the secret of the convulsions of that obscure form which had disappeared beneath the water.



BOOK FIFTH. — GRANDSON AND GRANDFATHER

I. — IN WHICH THE TREE WITH THE ZINC PLASTER APPEARS AGAIN.

SOME time after the events which we have just recorded, *Sieur Boulatruelle* experienced a lively emotion.

Sieur Boulatruelle was that road-mender of *Montfermeil* whom the reader has already seen in the gloomy parts of this book.

Boulatruelle, as the reader may, perchance, recall, was a man who was occupied with divers and troublesome matters. He broke stones and damaged travellers on the highway.

Road-mender and thief as he was, he cherished one dream; he believed in the treasures buried in the forest of Montfermeil. He hoped some day to find the money in the earth at the foot of a tree; in the meanwhile, he lived to search the pockets of passers-by.

Nevertheless, for an instant, he was prudent. He had just escaped neatly. He had been, as the reader is aware, picked up in Jondrette's garret in company with the other ruffians. Utility of a vice: his drunkenness had been his salvation. The authorities had never been able to make out whether he had been there in the quality of a robber or a man who had been robbed. An order of *nolle prosequi*, founded on his well authenticated state of intoxication on the evening of the ambush, had set him at liberty. He had taken to his heels. He had returned to his road from Gagny to Lagny, to make, under administrative supervision, broken stone for the good of the state, with downcast mien, in a very pensive mood, his ardor for theft somewhat cooled; but he was addicted none the less tenderly to the wine which had recently saved him.

As for the lively emotion which he had experienced a short time after his return to his road-mender's turf-thatched cot, here it is:

One morning, Boulatruelle, while on his way as was his wont, to his work, and possibly also to his ambush, a little before daybreak, caught sight, through the branches of the trees, of a man, whose back alone he saw, but the shape of whose shoulders, as it seemed to him at that distance and in the early dusk, was not entirely unfamiliar to him. Boulatruelle, although intoxicated, had a correct and lucid memory, a defensive arm that is indispensable to any one who is at all in conflict with legal order.

"Where the deuce have I seen something like that man yonder?" he said to himself. But he could make himself no answer, except that the man resembled some one of whom his memory preserved a confused trace.

However, apart from the identity which he could not manage to catch, Boulatruelle put things together and made calculations. This man did not belong in the country-side. He had just arrived there. On foot, evidently. No public conveyance passes through Montfermeil at that hour. He had walked all night. Whence came he? Not from a very great

distance; for he had neither haversack, nor bundle. From Paris, no doubt. Why was he in these woods? why was he there at such an hour? what had he come there for?

Boulatruelle thought of the treasure. By dint of ransacking his memory, he recalled in a vague way that he had already, many years before, had a similar alarm in connection with a man who produced on him the effect that he might well be this very individual.

"By the deuce," said Boulatruelle, "I'll find him again. I'll discover the parish of that parishioner. This prowler of Patron-Minette has a reason, and I'll know it. People can't have secrets in my forest if I don't have a finger in the pie."

He took his pick-axe which was very sharply pointed.

"There now," he grumbled, "is something that will search the earth and a man."

And, as one knots one thread to another thread, he took up the line of march at his best pace in the direction which the man must follow, and set out across the thickets.

When he had compassed a hundred strides, the day, which was already beginning to break, came to his assistance. Footprints stamped in the sand, weeds trodden down here and there, heather crushed, young branches in the brushwood bent and in the act of straightening themselves up again with the graceful deliberation of the arms of a pretty woman who stretches herself when she wakes, pointed out to him a sort of track. He followed it, then lost it. Time was flying. He plunged deeper into the woods and came to a sort of eminence. An early huntsman who was passing in the distance along a path, whistling the air of Guillery, suggested to him the idea of climbing a tree. Old as he was, he was agile. There stood close at hand a beech-tree of great size, worthy of Tityrus and of Boulatruelle. Boulatruelle ascended the beech as high as he was able.

The idea was a good one. On scrutinizing the solitary waste on the side where the forest is thoroughly entangled and wild, Boulatruelle suddenly caught sight of his man.

Hardly had he got his eye upon him when he lost sight of him.

The man entered, or rather, glided into, an open glade, at a considerable distance, masked by large trees, but with which Boulatruelle was perfectly familiar, on account of having noticed, near a large pile of porous stones, an ailing chestnut-

tree bandaged with a sheet of zinc nailed directly upon the bark. This glade was the one which was formerly called the Blaru-bottom. The heap of stones, destined for no one knows what employment, which was visible there thirty years ago, is doubtless still there. Nothing equals a heap of stones in longevity, unless it is a board fence. They are temporary expedients. What a reason for lasting!

Boulatruelle, with the rapidity of joy, dropped rather than descended from the tree. The lair was unearthed, the question now was to seize the beast. That famous treasure of his dreams was probably there.

It was no small matter to reach that glade. By the beaten paths, which indulge in a thousand teasing zigzags, it required a good quarter of an hour. In a bee-line, through the underbrush, which is peculiarly dense, very thorny, and very aggressive in that locality, a full half hour was necessary. Boulatruelle committed the error of not comprehending this. He believed in the straight line; a respectable optical illusion which ruins many a man. The thicket, bristling as it was, struck him as the best road.

"Let's take to the wolves' Rue de Rivoli," said he.

Boulatruelle, accustomed to taking crooked courses, was on this occasion guilty of the fault of going straight.

He flung himself resolutely into the tangle of undergrowth.

He had to deal with holly bushes, nettles, hawthorns, eglantines, thistles, and very irascible brambles. He was much lacerated.

At the bottom of the ravine he found water which he was obliged to traverse.

At last he reached the Blaru-bottom, after the lapse of forty minutes, sweating, soaked, breathless, scratched, and ferocious.

There was no one in the glade. Boulatruelle rushed to the heap of stones. It was in its place. It had not been carried off.

As for the man, he had vanished in the forest. He had made his escape. Where? in what direction? into what thicket? Impossible to guess.

And, heartrending to say, there, behind the pile of stones, in front of the tree with the sheet of zinc, was freshly turned earth, a pick-axe, abandoned or forgotten, and a hole.

The hole was empty.

"Thief!" shrieked Boulatruelle, shaking his fists at the horizon.

II. — MARIUS, EMERGING FROM CIVIL WAR, MAKES READY FOR DOMESTIC WAR.

For a long time, Marius was neither dead nor alive. For many weeks he lay in a fever accompanied by delirium, and by tolerably grave cerebral symptoms, caused more by the shocks of the wounds on the head than by the wounds themselves.

He repeated Cosette's name for whole nights in the melancholy loquacity of fever, and with the sombre obstinacy of agony. The extent of some of the lesions presented a serious danger, the suppuration of large wounds being always liable to become re-absorbed, and consequently, to kill the sick man, under certain atmospheric conditions; at every change of weather, at the slightest storm, the physician was uneasy.

"Above all things," he repeated, "let the wounded man be subjected to no emotion." The dressing of the wounds was complicated and difficult, the fixation of apparatus and bandages by cerecloths not having been invented as yet, at that epoch. Nicolette used up a sheet "as big as the ceiling" as she put it, for lint. It was not without difficulty that the chloruretted lotions and the nitrate of silver overcame the gangrene. As long as there was any danger, M. Gillenormand, seated in despair at his grandson's pillow, was, like Marius, neither alive nor dead.

Every day, and sometimes twice a day, a very well dressed gentleman with white hair, — such was the description given by the porter, — came to inquire about the wounded man, and left a large package of lint for the dressings.

Finally, on the 7th of September, four months to a day, after the sorrowful night when he had been brought back to his grandfather in a dying condition, the doctor declared that he would answer for Marius. Convalescence began. But Marius was forced to remain for two months more stretched out on a long chair, on account of the results called up by the fracture of his collar-bone. There always is a last wound like that which will not close, and which prolongs the dressings indefinitely, to the great annoyance of the sick person.

However, this long illness and this long convalescence saved him from all pursuit. In France, there is no wrath, not even of a public character, which six months will not extinguish. Revolts, in the present state of society, are so much

the fault of everyone, that they are followed by a certain necessity of shutting the eyes.

Let us add, that the inexcusable Gisquet order, which enjoined doctors to lodge information against the wounded, having outraged public opinion, and not opinion alone, but the King first of all, the wounded were covered and protected by this indignation; and, with the exception of those who had been made prisoners in the very act of combat, the councils of war did not dare to trouble any one. So Marius was left in peace.

M. Gillenormand first passed through all manner of anguish, and then through every form of ecstasy. It was found difficult to prevent his passing every night beside the wounded man; he had his big arm-chair carried to Marius' bedside; he required his daughter to take the finest linen in the house for compresses and bandages. Mademoiselle Gillenormand, like a sage and elderly person, contrived to spare the fine linen, while allowing the grandfather to think that he was obeyed. M. Gillenormand would not permit anyone to explain to him, that for the preparation of lint batiste is not nearly so good as coarse linen, nor new linen as old linen. He was present at all the dressings of the wounds from which Mademoiselle Gillenormand modestly absented herself. When the dead flesh was cut away with scissors, he said: "Aïe! aïe!" Nothing was more touching than to see him with his gentle, senile palsy, offer the wounded man a cup of his cooling-draught. He overwhelmed the doctor with questions. He did not observe that he asked the same ones over and over again.

On the day when the doctor announced to him that Marius was out of danger, the good man was in a delirium. He made his porter a present of three louis. That evening, on his return to his own chamber, he danced a gavotte, using his thumb and forefinger as castanets, and he sang the following song:

"Jeanne est née à Fougère,
Vrai nid d'une bergère;
J'adore son jupon,
Fripou.

"Amour, tu vis en elle;
Car c'est dans sa prunelle
Que tu mets ton carquois,
Narquois!

"Moi, je la chante, et j'aime,
Plus que Diane même,
Jeanne et ses durs tetons
Bretons."¹

¹ "Jeanne was born at Fougère, a true shepherd's nest; I adore her petticoat, the rogue.

"Love, thou dwellest in her; For 'tis in her eyes that thou placest thy quiver, sly scamp!

"As for me, I sing her, and I love, more than Diana herself, Jeanne and her firm Breton breasts."

Then he knelt upon a chair, and Basque, who was watching him through the half-open door, made sure that he was praying.

Up to that time, he had not believed in God.

At each succeeding phase of improvement, which became more and more pronounced, the grandfather raved. He executed a multitude of mechanical actions full of joy; he ascended and descended the stairs, without knowing why. A pretty female neighbor was amazed one morning at receiving a big bouquet; it was M. Gillenormand who had sent it to her. The husband made a jealous scene. M. Gillenormand tried to draw Nicolette upon his knees. He called Marius, "M. le Baron." He shouted: "Long live the Republic!"

Every moment, he kept asking, the doctor: "Is he no longer in danger?" He gazed upon Marius with the eyes of a grandmother. He brooded over him while he ate. He no longer knew himself, he no longer rendered himself an account of himself. Marius was the master of the house, there was abdication in his joy, he was the grandson of his grandson.

In the state of joy in which he then was, he was the most venerable of children. In his fear lest he might fatigue or annoy the convalescent, he stepped behind him to smile. He was content, joyous, delighted, charming, young. His white locks added a gentle majesty to the gay radiance of his visage. When grace is mingled with wrinkles, it is adorable. There is an indescribable aurora in beaming old age.

As for Marius, as he allowed them to dress his wounds and care for him, he had but one fixed idea: Cosette.

After the fever and delirium had left him, he did not again pronounce her name, and it might have been supposed that he no longer thought of her. He held his peace, precisely because his soul was there.

He did not know what had become of Cosette; the whole affair of the Rue de la Chanvrière was like a cloud in his memory; shadows that were almost indistinct, floated through his mind, Éponine, Gavroche, Mabeuf, the Thénardiens, all his friends gloomily intermingled with the smoke of the barricade; the strange passage of M. Fauchelevent through that adventure produced on him the effect of a puzzle in a tempest; he understood nothing connected with his own life, he did not know how nor by whom he had been saved, and no one of those around him knew this; all that they had been able to tell him was, that he had been brought home at night in a hackney-coach, to the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire; past, present, future

were nothing more to him than the mist of a vague idea; but in that fog there was one immovable point, one clear and precise outline, something made of granite, a resolution, a will; to find Cosette once more. For him, the idea of life was not distinct from the idea of Cosette. He had decreed in his heart that he would not accept the one without the other, and he was immovably resolved to exact of any person whatever, who should desire to force him to live,—from his grandfather, from fate, from hell,—the restitution of his vanished Eden.

He did not conceal from himself the fact that obstacles existed.

Let us here emphasize one detail, he was not won over and was but little softened by all the solicitude and tenderness of his grandfather. In the first place, he was not in the secret; then, in his reveries of an invalid, which were still feverish, possibly, he distrusted this tenderness as a strange and novel thing, which had for its object his conquest. He remained cold. The grandfather absolutely wasted his poor old smile. Marius said to himself that it was all right so long as he, Marius, did not speak, and let things take their course; but that when it became a question of Cosette, he would find another face, and that his grandfather's true attitude would be unmasked. Then there would be an unpleasant scene; a recrudescence of family questions, a confrontation of positions, every sort of sarcasm and all manner of objections at one and the same time, Fauchelevent, Coupevent, fortune, poverty, a stone about his neck, the future. Violent resistance; conclusion: a refusal. Marius stiffened himself in advance.

And then, in proportion as he regained life, the old ulcers of his memory opened once more, he reflected again on the past, Colonel Pontmercy placed himself once more between M. Gillenormand and him, Marius, he told himself that he had no true kindness to expect from a person who had been so unjust and so hard to his father. And with health, there returned to him a sort of harshness towards his grandfather. The old man was gently pained by this. M. Gillenormand, without however allowing it to appear, observed that Marius, ever since the latter had been brought back to him and had regained consciousness, had not once called him father. It is true that he did not say "monsieur" to him; but he contrived not to say either the one or the other, by means of a certain way of turning his phrases. Obviously, a crisis was approaching.

As almost always happens in such cases, Marius skirmished

before giving battle, by way of proving himself. This is called "feeling the ground." One morning it came to pass that M. Gillenormand spoke slightly of the Convention, à propos of a newspaper which had fallen into his hands, and gave vent to a Royalist harangue on Danton, Saint-Juste and Robespierre. — "The men of '93 were giants," said Marius with severity. The old man held his peace, and uttered not a sound during the remainder of that day.

Marius, who had always present to his mind the inflexible grandfather of his early years, interpreted this silence as a profound concentration of wrath, augured from it a hot conflict, and augmented his preparations for the fray in the inmost recesses of his mind.

He decided that, in case of a refusal, he would tear off his bandages, dislocate his collar-bone, that he would lay bare all the wounds which he had left, and would reject all food. His wounds were his munitions of war. He would have Cosette or die.

He awaited the propitious moment with the crafty patience of the sick.

That moment arrived.

III. — MARIUS ATTACKED.

ONE day, M. Gillenormand, while his daughter was putting in order the phials and cups on the marble of the commode, bent over Marius and said to him in his tenderest accents: "Look here, my little Marius, if I were in your place, I would eat meat now in preference to fish. A fried sole is excellent to begin a convalescence with, but a good outlet is needed to put a sick man on his feet."

Marius, who had almost entirely recovered his strength, collected the whole of it, drew himself up into a sitting posture, laid his two clenched fists on the sheets of his bed, looked his grandfather in the face, assumed a terrible air, and said:

"This leads me to say something to you."

"What is it?"

"That I wish to marry."

"Agreed," said his grandfather. — And he burst out laughing.

"How agreed?"

"Yes, agreed. You shall have your little girl."

Marius stunned and overwhelmed with the dazzling shock, trembled in every limb.

M. Gillenormand went on :

"Yes, you shall have her, that pretty little girl of yours. She comes every day in the shape of an old gentleman to inquire after you. Ever since you were wounded, she has passed her time in weeping and making lint. I have made inquiries. She lives in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7. Ah ! There we have it ! Ah ! so you want her ! Well, you shall have her. You're caught. You had arranged your little plot, you had said to yourself : — 'I'm going to signify this squarely to my grandfather, to that mummy of the Regency and of the Directory, to that ancieut beau, to that Dorante turned Gêronte ; he has indulged in his frivolities also, that he has, and he has had his love affairs, and his grisettes and his Cosettes ; he has made his rustle, he has had his wings, he has eaten of the bread of spring ; he certainly must remember it.' Ah ! you take the cockchafer by the horns. That's good. I offer you a cutlet and you answer me : 'By the way, I want to marry.' There's a transition for you ! Ah ! you reckoned on a bickering ! You do not know that I am an old coward. What do you say to that ? You are vexed ? You did not expect to find your grandfather still more foolish than yourself, you are wasting the discourse which you meant to bestow upon me, Mr. Lawyer, and that's vexatious. Well, so much the worse, rage away. I'll do whatever you wish, and that cuts you short, imbecile ! Listen. I have made my inquiries I'm cunning too ; she is charming, she is discreet, it is not true about the lancer, she has made heaps of lint, she's a jewel, she adores you, if you had died, there would have been three of us, her coffin would have accompanied mine. I have had an idea, ever since you have been better, of simply planting her at your bedside, but it is only in romances that young girls are brought to the bedsides of handsome young wounded men who interest them. It is not done. What would your aunt have said to it ? You were nude three quarters of the time, my good fellow. Ask Nicolette, who has not left you for a moment, if there was any possibility of having a woman here. And then, what would the doctor have said ? A pretty girl does not cure a man of fever. In short, it's all right, let us say no more about it, all's said, all's done, it's all settled, take her. Such is my ferocity. You see, I perceived that you did not love me. I said to myself : 'Here now, I have my little Cosette right under my hand, I'm going to give her to him, he will be obliged to love me a little then, or he must tell the reason why.' Ah ! so

you thought that the old man was going to storm, to put on a big voice, to shout no, and to lift his cane at all that aurora. Not a bit of it. Cosette, so be it; love, so be it; I ask nothing better. Pray take the trouble of getting married, sir. Be happy, my well-beloved child."

That said, the old man burst forth into sobs.

And he seized Marius' head, and pressed it with both arms against his breast, and both fell to weeping. This is one of the forms of supreme happiness.

"Father!" cried Marius.

"Ah, so you love me!" said the old man.

An ineffable moment ensued. They were choking and could not speak.

At length, the old man stammered:

"Come! his mouth is unstopped at last. He has said: 'Father' to me."

Marius disengaged his head from his grandfather's arms, and said gently:

"But, father, now that I am quite well, it seems to me that I might see her."

"Agreed again, you shall see her tomorrow."

"Father!"

"What?"

"Why not today?"

"Well, today then. Let it be today. You have called me 'father' three times, and it is worth it. I will attend to it. She shall be brought hither. Agreed, I tell you. It has already been put into verse. This is the ending of the elegy of the 'Jeune Malade' by André Chénier, by André Chénier whose throat was cut by the ras . . . by the giants of '93."

M. Gillenormand fancied that he detected a faint frown on the part of Marius, who, in truth, as we must admit, was no longer listening to him, and who was thinking far more of Cosette than of 1793.

The grandfather, trembling at having so inopportunistically introduced André Chénier, resumed precipitately:

"Cut his throat is not the word. The fact is that the great revolutionary geniuses, who were not malicious, that is incontestable, who were heroes, pardi! found that André Chénier embarrassed them somewhat, and they had him guillot . . . that is to say, those great men on the 7th of Thermidor, besought André Chénier, in the interests of public safety, to be so good as to go . . ."

M. Gillenormand, clutched by the throat by his own phrase,

could not proceed. Being able neither to finish it nor to retract it, while his daughter arranged the pillow behind Marius, who was overwhelmed with so many emotions, the old man rushed headlong, with as much rapidity as his age permitted, from the bed-chamber, shut the door behind him, and, purple, choking and foaming at the mouth, his eyes starting from his head he found himself nose to nose with honest Basque, who was blacking boots in the anteroom. He seized Basque by the collar, and shouted full in his face in fury : — “By the hundred thousand Javottes of the devil, those ruffians did assassinate him !”

“Who, sir?”

“André Chénier !”

“Yes, sir,” said Basque in alarm.

IV. — MADEMOISELLE GILLENORMAND ENDS BY NO LONGER THINKING IT A BAD THING THAT M. FAUCHELEVENT SHOULD HAVE ENTERED WITH SOMETHING UNDER HIS ARM.

Cosette and Marius beheld each other once more.

What that interview was like we decline to say. There are things which one must not attempt to depict ; the sun is one of them.

The entire family, including Basque and Nicolette, were assembled in Marius' chamber at the moment when Cosette entered it.

Precisely at that moment, the grandfather was on the point of blowing his nose ; he stopped short, holding his nose in his handkerchief, and gazing over it at Cosette :

She appeared on the threshold ; it seemed to him that she was surrounded by a glory.

“Adorable !” he exclaimed.

Then he blew his nose noisily.

Cosette was intoxicated, delighted, frightened, in heaven. She was as thoroughly alarmed as any one can be by happiness. She stammered all pale, yet flushed, she wanted to fling herself into Marius' arms, and dared not. Ashamed of loving in the presence of all these people. People are pitiless towards happy lovers ; they remain when the latter most desire to be left alone. Lovers have no need of any people whatever.

With Cosette, and behind her, there had entered a man with white hair who was grave yet smiling, though with a

vague and heartrending smile. It was "Monsieur Fauchelevant"; it was Jean Valjean.

He was very well dressed, as the porter had said, entirely in black, in perfectly new garments, and with a white cravat.

The porter was a thousand leagues from recognizing in this correct bourgeois, in this probable notary, the fear-inspiring bearer of the corpse, who had sprung up at his door on the night of the 7th of June, tattered, muddy, hideous, haggard, his face masked in blood and mire, supporting in his arms the fainting Marius; still, his porter's scent was aroused. When M. Fauchelevant arrived with Cosette, the porter had not been able to refrain from communicating to his wife this aside: "I don't know why it is, but I can't help fancying that I've seen that face before."

M. Fauchelevant in Marius' chamber, remained apart near the door. He had under his arm, a package which bore considerable resemblance to an octavo volume enveloped in paper. The enveloping paper was of a greenish hue, and appeared to be mouldy.

"Does the gentleman always have books like that under his arm?" Mademoiselle Gillenormand, who did not like books, demanded in a low tone of Nicolette.

"Well," retorted M. Gillenormand, who had overheard her, in the same tone, "he's a learned man. What then? Is that his fault? Monsieur Boulard, one of my acquaintances, never walked out without a book under his arm either, and he always had some old volume hugged to his heart like that."

And, with a bow, he said aloud:

"Monsieur Tranchelevant . . ."

Father Gillenormand did not do it intentionally, but inattention to proper names was an aristocratic habit of his.

"Monsieur Tranchelevant, I have the honor of asking you, on behalf of my grandson, Baron Marius Pontmercy, for the hand of Mademoiselle."

Monsieur Tranchelevant bowed.

"That's settled," said the grandfather.

And, turning to Marius and Cosette, with both arms extended in blessing, he cried:

"Permission to adore each other!"

They did not require him to repeat it twice. So much the worse! the chirping began. They talked low. Marius, resting on his elbow on his reclining chair, Cosette standing beside him. "Oh, heavens!" murmured Cosette, "I see you once again! it is thou! it is you! The idea of going and

fighting like that! But why? It is horrible. I have been dead for four months. Oh! how wicked it was of you to go to that battle! What had I done to you? I pardon you, but you will never do it again. A little while ago, when they came to tell us to come to you, I still thought that I was about to die, but it was from joy. I was so sad! I have not taken the time to dress myself, I must frighten people with my looks! What will your relatives say to see me in a crumpled collar? Do speak! You let me do all the talking. We are still in the Rue de l'Homme Armé. It seems that your shoulder was terrible. They told me that you could put your fist in it. And then, it seems that they cut your flesh with the scissors. That is frightful. I have cried till I have no eyes left. It is queer that a person can suffer like that. Your grandfather has a very kindly air. Don't disturb yourself, don't rise on your elbow, you will injure yourself. Oh! how happy I am! So our unhappiness is over! I am quite foolish. I had things to say to you, and I no longer know in the least what they were. Do you still love me? We live in the Rue de l'Homme Armé. There is no garden. I made lint all the time; stay, sir, look, it is your fault, I have a callous on my fingers."

"Angel!" said Marius.

Angel is the only word in the language which cannot be worn out. No other word could resist the merciless use which lovers make of it.

Then as there were spectators, they paused and said not a word more, contenting themselves with softly touching each other's hands.

M. Gillenormand turned towards those who were in the room and cried:

"Talk loud, the rest of you. Make a noise, you people behind the scenes. Come, a little uproar, the deuce! so that the children can chatter at their ease."

And, approaching Marius and Cosette, he said to them in a very low voice:

"Call each other *thou*. Don't stand on ceremony."

Aunt Gillenormand looked on in amazement at this irruption of light in her elderly household. There was nothing aggressive about this amazement; it was not the least in the world like the scandalized and envious glance of an owl at two turtle-doves, it was the stupid eye of a poor innocent seven and fifty years of age; it was a life which had been a failure gazing at that triumph, love.

"Mademoiselle Gillenormand senior," said her father to her, "I told you that this is what would happen to you."

He remained silent for a moment, and then added:

"Look at the happiness of others."

Then he turned to Cosette.

"How pretty she is! how pretty she is! She's a Greuze. So you are going to have that all to yourself, you scamp! Ah! my rogue, you are getting off nicely with me, you are happy; if I were not fifteen years too old, we would fight with swords to see which of us should have her. Come now! I am in love with you, mademoiselle. It's perfectly simple. It is your right. You are in the right. Ah! what a sweet, charming little wedding this will make! Our parish is Saint-Denis du Saint Sacrament, but I will get a dispensation so that you can be married at Saint-Paul. The church is better. It was built by the Jesuits. It is more coquettish. It is opposite the fountain of Cardinal de Birague. The masterpiece of Jesuit architecture is at Namur. It is called Saint-Loup. You must go there after you are married. It is worth the journey. Mademoiselle, I am quite of your mind, I think girls ought to marry, that is what they are made for. There is a certain Sainte-Catherine whom I should always like to see uncoiffed.¹ It's a fine thing to remain a spinster, but it is chilly. The Bible says: Multiply. In order to save the people, Jeanne d'Arc is needed; but in order to make people, what is needed is Mother Goose. So, marry, my beauties. I really do not see the use in remaining a spinster! I know that they have their chapel apart in the church, and that they fall back on the Society of the Virgin; but, sapristi, a handsome husband, a fine fellow, and at the expiration of a year, a big, blond brat who nurses lustily, and who has fine rolls of fat on his thighs, and who musses up your breast in handfuls with his little rosy paws, laughing the while like the dawn,—that's better than holding a candle at vespers, and chanting *Turris eburnea!*"

The grandfather executed a pirouette on his eighty-year-old heels, and began to talk again like a spring that has broken loose once more:

"Ainsi, bornant les cours de tes rêvasseries,
Alcippe, il est donc vrai, dans peu tu te maries."²

¹ In allusion to the expression, *coiffer Sainte-Catherine*, "to remain unmarried."

² "Thus, hemming in the course of thy musings, Alcippus, it is true that thou wilt wed ere long."

"By the way!"

"What is it, father?"

"Had not you an intimate friend?"

"Yes, Courfeyrac."

"What has become of him?"

"He is dead."

"That is good."

He seated himself near them, made Cosette sit down, and took their four hands in his aged and wrinkled hands:

"She is exquisite, this darling. She's a masterpiece, this Cosette! She is a very little girl and a very great lady. She will only be a Baroness, which is a come down for her; she was born a Marquise. What eyelashes she has! Get it well fixed in your noddles, my children, that you are in the true road. Love each other. Be foolish about it. Love is the folly of men and the wit of God. Adore each other. Only," he added, suddenly becoming gloomy, "what a misfortune! It has just occurred to me! More than half of what I possess is swallowed up in an annuity; so long as I live, it will not matter, but after my death, a score of years hence, ah! my poor children, you will not have a sou! Your beautiful white hands, Madame la Baronne, will do the devil the honor of pulling him by the tail."¹

At this point they heard a grave and tranquil voice say:

"Mademoiselle Euphrasie Fauchelevent possesses six hundred thousand francs."

It was the voice of Jean Valjean.

So far he had not uttered a single word, no one seemed to be aware that he was there, and he had remained standing erect and motionless, behind all these happy people.

"What has Mademoiselle Euphrasie to do with the question?" inquired the startled grandfather.

"I am she," replied Cosette.

"Six hundred thousand francs?" resumed M. Gillenormand.

"Minus fourteen or fifteen thousand francs, possibly," said Jean Valjean.

And he laid on the table the package which Mademoiselle Gillenormand had mistaken for a book.

Jean Valjean himself opened the package; it was a bundle of bank-notes. They were turned over and counted. There were five hundred notes for a thousand francs each, and one hundred and sixty-eight of five hundred. In all, five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs.

¹ *Tirer le diable par la queue*, "to live from hand to mouth."

"This is a fine book," said M. Gillenormand.

"Five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs!" murmured the aunt.

"This arranges things well, does it not, Mademoiselle Gillenormand senior?" said the grandfather. "That devil of a Marius has ferreted out the nest of a millionaire grisette in his tree of dreams! Just trust to the love affairs of young folks now, will you! Students find studentesses with six hundred thousand francs. Cherubino works better than Rothschild."

"Five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs!" repeated Mademoiselle Gillenormand, in a low tone. "Five hundred and eighty-four! one might as well say six hundred thousand!"

As for Marius and Cosette, they were gazing at each other while this was going on; they hardly heeded this detail.

V. — DEPOSIT YOUR MONEY IN A FOREST RATHER THAN WITH A NOTARY.

THE reader has, no doubt, understood, without necessitating a lengthy explanation, that Jean Valjean, after the Champ-mathieu affair, had been able, thanks to his first escape of a few days' duration, to come to Paris and to withdraw in season, from the hands of Laffitte the sum earned by him, under the name of Monsieur Madeleine, at Montreuil-sur-Mer; and that fearing that he might be recaptured, — which eventually happened — he had buried and hidden that sum in the forest of Montfermeil, in the locality known as the Blaru-bottom. The sum, six hundred and thirty thousand francs, all in bank-bills, was not very bulky, and was contained in a box; only, in order to preserve the box from dampness, he had placed it in a coffer filled with chestnut shavings. In the same coffer he had placed his other treasures, the Bishop's candlesticks. It will be remembered that he had carried off the candlesticks when he made his escape from Montreuil-sur-Mer. The man seen one evening for the first time by Boulatruelle, was Jean Valjean. Later on, every time that Jean Valjean needed money, he went to get it in the Blaru-bottom. Hence the absences which we have mentioned. He had a pickaxe somewhere in the heather, in a hiding-place known to himself alone. When he beheld Marius convalescent, feeling that the hour was at hand, when that money might prove of service, he had gone to get it; it was he again, whom Boula-

truelle had seen in the woods, but on this occasion, in the morning instead of in the evening. Boulatruelle inherited his pickaxe.

The actual sum was five hundred and eighty-four thousand, five hundred francs. Jean Valjean withdrew the five hundred francs for himself. — "We shall see hereafter," he thought.

The difference between that sum and the six hundred and thirty thousand francs withdrawn from Laffitte represented his expenditure in ten years, from 1823 to 1833. The five years of his stay in the convent had cost only five thousand francs.

Jean Valjean set the two candlesticks on the chimney-piece, where they glittered to the great admiration of Toussaint.

Moreover, Jean Valjean knew that he was delivered from Javert. The story had been told in his presence, and he had verified the fact in the *Moniteur*, how a police inspector named Javert had been found drowned under a boat belonging to some laundresses, between the Pont au Change and the Pont-Neuf, and that a writing left by this man, otherwise irreproachable and highly esteemed by his superiors, pointed to a fit of mental aberration and a suicide. — "In fact," thought Jean Valjean, "since he left me at liberty, once having got me in his power, he must have been already mad."

VI.—THE TWO OLD MEN DO EVERYTHING, EACH ONE AFTER HIS OWN FASHION, TO RENDER COSETTE HAPPY.

EVERYTHING was made ready for the wedding. The doctor, on being consulted, declared that it might take place in February. It was then December. A few ravishing weeks of perfect happiness passed.

The grandfather was not the least happy of them all. He remained for a quarter of an hour at a time, gazing at Cosette.

"The wonderful, beautiful girl!" he exclaimed. "And she has so sweet and good an air! she is, without exception, the most charming girl that I have ever seen in my life. Later on, she'll have virtues with an odor of violets. How graceful! one cannot live otherwise than nobly with such a creature. Marius, my boy, you are a Baron, you are rich, don't go to pettifogging, I beg of you."

Cosette and Marius had passed abruptly from the sepulchre to paradise. The transition had not been softened, and they would have been stunned, had they not been dazzled by it.

"Do you understand anything about it?" said Marius to Cosette.

"No," replied Cosette, "but it seems to me that the good God is caring for us."

Jean Valjean did everything, smoothed away every difficulty, arranged everything, made everything easy. He hastened towards Cosette's happiness with as much ardor, and, apparently with as much joy, as Cosette herself.

As he had been a mayor, he understood how to solve that delicate problem, with the secret of which he alone was acquainted, Cosette's civil status. If he were to announce her origin bluntly, it might prevent the marriage, who knows? He extricated Cosette from all difficulties. He concocted for her a family of dead people, a sure means of not encountering any objections. Cosette was the only scion of an extinct family; Cosette was not his own daughter, but the daughter of the other Fauchelevant. Two brothers Fauchelevant had been gardeners to the convent of the Petit-Picus. Inquiry was made at that convent; the very best information and the most respectable references abounded; the good nuns, not very apt and but little inclined to fathom questions of paternity, and not attaching any importance to the matter, had never understood exactly of which of the two Fauchelevents Cosette was the daughter. They said what was wanted and they said it with zeal. An *acte de notoriété* was drawn up. Cosette became in the eyes of the law, Mademoiselle Euphrasie Fauchelevant. She was declared an orphan, both father and mother being dead. Jean Valjean so arranged it that he was appointed, under the name of Fauchelevant, as Cosette's guardian, with M. Gillenormand as supervising guardian over him.

As for the five hundred and eighty thousand francs, they constituted a legacy bequeathed to Cosette by a dead person, who desired to remain unknown. The original legacy had consisted of five hundred and ninety-four thousand francs; but ten thousand francs had been expended on the education of Mademoiselle Euphrasie, five thousand francs of that amount having been paid to the convent. This legacy, deposited in the hands of a third party, was to be turned over to Cosette at her majority, or at the date of her marriage. This, taken as a whole, was very acceptable, as the reader will perceive, especially when the sum due was half a million. There were some peculiarities here and there, it is true, but they were not noticed; one of the interested parties had his eyes

blindfolded by love, the others by the six hundred thousand francs.

Cosette learned that she was not the daughter of that old man whom she had so long called father. He was merely a kinsman; another Fauchelevent was her real father. At any other time this would have broken her heart. But at the ineffable moment which she was then passing through, it cast but a slight shadow, a faint cloud, and she was so full of joy that the cloud did not last long. She had Marius. The young man arrived, the old man was effaced; such is life.

And then, Cosette had, for long years, been habituated to seeing enigmas around her; every being who has had a mysterious childhood, is always prepared for certain renunciations.

Nevertheless, she continued to call Jean Valjean: Father.

Cosette, happy as the angels, was enthusiastic over Father Gillenormand. It is true that he overwhelmed her with gallant compliments and presents. While Jean Valjean was building up for Cosette, a normal situation in society and an unassailable status, M. Gillenormand was superintending the basket of wedding gifts. Nothing so amused him as being magnificent. He had given to Cosette a robe of Binche guipure which had descended to him from his own grandmother.

"These fashions come up again," said he, "ancient things are the rage, and the young women of my old age dress like the old women of my childhood."

He rifled his respectable chests of drawers in Coromandel lacquer, with swelling fronts, which had not been opened for years. — "Let us hear the confession of these dowagers," he said, "let us see what they have in their paunches." He noisily violated the pot-bellied drawers of all his wives, of all his mistresses and of all his grandmothers. Pekins, damasks, lampas, painted moires, robes of shot gros de Tours, India kerchiefs embroidered in gold that could be washed, dauphines without a right or wrong side, in the piece, Genoa and Alençon point lace, parures in antique goldsmith's work, ivory bon-bon boxes ornamented with microscopic battles, gewgaws and ribbons — he lavished everything on Cosette. Cosette, amazed, desperately in love with Marius, and wild with gratitude towards M. Gillenormand, dreamed of a happiness without limit clothed in satin and velvet. Her wedding basket seemed to her to be upheld by seraphim. Her soul flew out into the azure depths, with wings of Mechlin lace.

The intoxication of the lovers was only equalled, as we have already said, by the ecstasy of the grandfather. A sort

of flourish of trumpets went on in the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire.

Every morning, a fresh offering of bric-à-brac from the grandfather to Cosette. All possible knickknacks glittered around her.

One day Marius, who was fond of talking gravely in the midst of his bliss, said, à propos of I know not what incident :

"The men of the revolution are so great, that they have the prestige of the ages, like Cato and like Phocion, and each one of them seems to me an antique memory."

"Moire antique !" exclaimed the old gentleman. "Thanks, Marius. That is precisely the idea of which I was in search."

And on the following day, a magnificent dress of tea-rose colored moire antique was added to Cosette's wedding presents.

From these fripperies, the grandfather extracted a bit of wisdom.

"Love is all very well; but there must be something else to go with it. The useless must be mingled with happiness. Happiness is only the necessary. Season that enormously with the superfluous for me. A palace and her heart. Her heart and the Louvre. Her heart and the grand waterworks of Versailles. Give me my shepherdess and try to make her a duchess. Fetch me Phyllis crowned with corn-flowers, and add a hundred thousand francs income. Open for me a bucolic perspective as far as you can see, beneath a marble colonnade. I consent to the bucolic and also to the fairy spectacle of marble and gold. Dry happiness resembles dry bread. One eats, but one does not dine. I want the superfluous, the useless, the extravagant, excess, that which serves no purpose. I remember to have seen, in the Cathedral of Strasburg, a clock, as tall as a three-story house which marked the hours, which had the kindness to indicate the hour, but which had not the air of being made for that; and which, after having struck midday, or midnight, — midday, the hour of the sun, or midnight, the hour of love, — or any other hour that you like, gave you the moon and the stars, the earth and the sea, birds and fishes, Phœbus and Phœbe, and a host of things which emerged from a niche, and the twelve apostles, and the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and Éponine, and Sabinus, and a throng of little gilded goodmen, who played on the trumpet to boot. Without reckoning delicious chimes which it sprinkled through the air, on every occasion, without anyone's knowing why. Is a petty bald clock-face which merely tells the hour equal to that? For my part, I am of the opinion of the

big clock of Strasburg, and I prefer it to the cuckoo clock from the Black Forest."

M. Gillenormand talked nonsense in connection with the wedding, and all the fripperies of the eighteenth century passed pell-mell through his dithyrambs.

"You are ignorant of the art of festivals. You do not know how to organize a day of enjoyment in this age," he exclaimed. "Your nineteenth century is weak. It lacks excess. It ignores the rich, it ignores the noble. In everything it is clean-shaven. Your third estate is insipid, colorless, odorless, and shapeless. The dreams of your bourgeois who set up, as they express it: a pretty boudoir freshly decorated, violet ebony and calico. Make way! Make way! the Sieur Curmudgeon is marrying Mademoiselle Clutch-penny. Sumptuousness and splendor. A louis d'or has been stuck to a candle. There's the epoch for you. My demand is that I may flee from it beyond the Sarmatians. Ah! in 1787, I predicted that all was lost, from the day when I beheld the Duc de Rohan, Prince de Léon, Duc de Chabot, Duc de Montbazan, Marquis de Soubise, Vicomte de Thouars, peer of France, go to Longchamps in a tapecu! That has borne its fruits. In this century, men attend to business, they gamble on 'Change, they win money, they are stingy. People take care of their surfaces and varnish them; every one is dressed as though just out of a band-box, washed, soaped, scraped, shaved, combed, waked, smoothed, rubbed, brushed, cleaned on the outside, irreproachable, polished as a pebble, discreet, neat, and at the same time, death of my life, in the depths of their consciences they have dung-heaps and cess-pools that are enough to make a cow-herd who blows his nose in his fingers, recoil. I grant to this age the device: "Dirty Cleanliness." Don't be vexed, Marius, give me permission to speak; I say no evil of the people as you see, I am always harping on your people, but do look favorably on my dealing a bit of a slap to the bourgeoisie. I belong to it. He who loves well lashes well. Thereupon, I say plainly, that now-a-days people marry, but that they no longer know how to marry. Ah! it is true, I regret the grace of the ancient manners. I regret everything about them, their elegance, their chivalry, those courteous and delicate ways, that joyous luxury which every one possessed, music forming part of the wedding, a symphony above stairs, a beating of drums below stairs, the dances, the joyous faces round the table, the fine-spun gallant compliments, the songs, the fireworks, the frank laughter, the devil's own row, the huge knots of ribbon.

I regret the bride's garter. The bride's garter is cousin to the girdle of Venus. On what does the war of Troy turn? On Helen's garter, parbleu! Why did they fight, why did Diomed the divine break over the head of Meriones that great brazen helmet of ten points? why did Achilles and Hector hew each other up with vast blows of their lances? Because Helen allowed Paris to take her garter. With Cosette's garter, Homer would construct the *Iliad*. He would put in his poem, a loquacious old fellow, like me, and he would call him Nestor. My friends, in bygone days, in those amiable days of yore, people married wisely; they had a good contract, and then they had a good carouse. As soon as Cujas had taken his departure, Gamacho entered. But, in sooth! the stomach is an agreeable beast which demands its due, and which wants to have its wedding also. People supped well, and had at table a beautiful neighbor without a guimpe so that her throat was only moderately concealed. Oh! the large laughing mouths, and how gay we were in those days! youth was a bouquet; every young man terminated in a branch of lilacs or a tuft of roses; whether he was a shepherd or a warrior; and if, by chance, one was a captain of dragoons, one found means to call oneself Florian. People thought much of looking well. They embroidered and tinted themselves. A bourgeois had the air of a flower, a Marquis had the air of a precious stone. People had no straps to their boots, they had no boots. They were spruce, shining, waved, lustrous, fluttering, dainty, coquettish, which did not at all prevent their wearing swords by their sides. The humming-bird has beak and claws. That was the day of the *Galant Indies*. One of the sides of that century was delicate, the other was magnificent; and by the green cabbages! people amused themselves. To-day, people are serious. The bourgeois is avaricious, the bourgeoisie is a prude; your century is unfortunate. People would drive away the Graces as being too low in the neck. Alas! beauty is concealed as though it were ugliness. Since the revolution, everything, including the ballet-dancers, has had its trowsers; a mountebank dancer must be grave; your rigadoons are doctrinarian. It is necessary to be majestic. People would be greatly annoyed if they did not carry their chins in their cravats. The ideal of an urchin of twenty when he marries, is to resemble M. Royer-Collard. And do you know what one arrives at with that majesty? at being petty. Learn this: joy is not only joyous; it is great. But be in love gayly then, what the deuce! marry,

when you marry, with fever and giddiness, and tumult, and the uproar of happiness! Be grave in church, well and good. But, as soon as the mass is finished, sarpejou! you must make a dream whirl around the bride. A marriage should be royal and chimerical; it should promenade its ceremony from the cathedral of Rheims to the pagoda of Chanteloup. I have a horror of a paltry wedding. Ventregoulette! be in Olympus for that one day, at least. Be one of the gods. Ah! people might be sylphs. Games and Laughter, argiraspides; they are stupids. My friends, every recently made bridegroom ought to be Prince Aldobrandini. Profit by that unique minute in life to soar away to the empyrean with the swans and the eagles, even if you do have to fall back on the morrow into the bourgeoisie of the frogs. Don't economize on the nuptials, do not prune them of their splendors; don't scrimp on the day when you beam. The wedding is not the housekeeping. Oh! if I were to carry out my fancy, it would be gallant, violins would be heard under the trees. Here is my programme: sky-blue and silver. I would mingle with the festival the rural divinities, I would convoke the Dryads and the Nereids. The nuptials of Amphitrite, a rosy cloud, nymphs with well-dressed locks and entirely naked, an Academician offering quatrains to the goddess, a chariot drawn by marine monsters.

“Triton trottait devant, et tirait de sa conque
Des sons si ravissants qu'il ravissait quiconque!”¹

—there's a festive programme, there's a good one, or else I know nothing of such matters, deuce take it!”

While the grandfather, in full lyrical effusion, was listening to himself, Cosette and Marius grew intoxicated as they gazed freely at each other.

Aunt Gillenormand surveyed all this with her imperturbable placidity. Within the last five or six months she had experienced a certain amount of emotions. Marius returned, Marius brought back bleeding, Marius brought back from a barricade, Marius dead, then living, Marius reconciled, Marius betrothed, Marius wedding a poor girl, Marius wedding a millionairess. The six hundred thousand francs had been her last surprise. Then, her indifference of a girl taking her first communion returned to her. She went regularly to service, told her beads, read her euchology, mumbled *Aves* in one

¹ “Triton trotted on before, and drew from his conch-shell sounds so ravishing that he delighted everyone!”

corner of the house, while *I love you* was being whispered in the other, and she beheld Marius and Cosette in a vague way, like two shadows. The shadow was herself.

There is a certain state of inert asceticism in which the soul, neutralized by torpor, a stranger to that which may be designated as the business of living, receives no impressions, either human, or pleasant or painful, with the exception of earthquakes and catastrophes. This devotion, as Father Gillenormand said to his daughter, corresponds to a cold in the head. You smell nothing of life. Neither any bad, nor any good odor.

Moreover, the six hundred thousand francs had settled the elderly spinster's indecision. Her father had acquired the habit of taking her so little into account, that he had not consulted her in the matter of consent to Marius' marriage. He had acted impetuously, according to his wont, having, a despot-turned slave, but a single thought, — to satisfy Marius. As for the aunt, — it had not even occurred to him that the aunt existed, and that she could have an opinion of her own, and, sheep as she was, this had vexed her. Somewhat resentful in her inmost soul, but impassible externally, she had said to herself: "My father has settled the question of the marriage without reference to me; I shall settle the question of the inheritance without consulting him." She was rich, in fact, and her father was not. She had reserved her decision on this point. It is probable, that, had the match been a poor one, she would have left him poor. "So much the worse for my nephew! he is wedding a beggar, let him be a beggar himself!" But Cosette's half-million pleased the aunt, and altered her inward situation so far as this pair of lovers were concerned. One owes some consideration to six hundred thousand francs, and it was evident that she could not do otherwise than leave her fortune to these young people, since they did not need it.

It was arranged that the couple should live with the grandfather — M. Gillenormand insisted on resigning to them his chamber, the finest in the house. — "That will make me young again," he said. "It's an old plan of mine. I have always entertained the idea of having a wedding in my chamber."

He furnished this chamber with a multitude of elegant trifles. He had the ceiling and walls hung with an extraordinary stuff, which he had by him in the piece, and which he believed to have emanated from Utrecht, with a buttercup-colored satin ground, covered with velvet auricula blossoms.

— “It was with that stuff,” said he, “that the bed of the Duchesse d’Anville at la Roche-Guyon was draped.” — On the chimney-piece, he set a little figure in Saxe porcelain, carrying a muff against her nude stomach.

M. Gillenormand’s library became the lawyer’s study which Marius needed; a study, it will be remembered, being required by the council of the order.

VII. — THE EFFECTS OF DREAMS MINGLED WITH HAPPINESS.

THE lovers saw each other every day. Cosette came with M. Fauchelevant. — “This is reversing things,” said Made-moiselle Gillenormand, “to have the bride come to the house to do the courting like this.” But Marius’ convalescence had caused the habit to become established, and the arm-chairs of the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire, better adapted to interviews than the straw chairs of the Rue de l’Homme Armé, had rooted it. Marius and M. Fauchelevant saw each other, but did not address each other. It seemed as though this had been agreed upon. Every girl needs a chaperon. Cosette could not have come without M. Fauchelevant. In Marius’ eyes, M. Fauchelevant was the condition attached to Cosette. He accepted it. By dint of discussing political matters, vaguely and without precision, from the point of view of the general amelioration of the fate of all men, they came to say a little more than “yes” and “no.” Once, on the subject of education, which Marius wished to have free and obligatory, multiplied under all forms, lavished on everyone, like the air and the sun, in a word, respirable for the entire population, they were in unison, and they almost conversed. M. Fauchelevant talked well, and even with a certain loftiness of language — still, he lacked something indescribable. M. Fauchelevant possessed something less and also something more, than a man of the world.

Marius, inwardly, and in the depths of his thought, surrounded with all sorts of mute questions this M. Fauchelevant, who was, to him, simply benevolent and cold. There were moments when doubts as to his own recollections occurred to him. There was a void in his memory, a black spot, an abyss excavated by four months of agony. — Many things had been lost therein. He had come to the point of asking himself whether it were really a fact that he had seen M. Fauchelevant, so serious and so calm a man, in the barricade.

This was not, however, the only stupor which the apparitions and the disappearances of the past had left in his mind. It must not be supposed that he was delivered from all those obsessions of the memory which force us, even when happy, even when satisfied, to glance sadly behind us. The head which does not turn backwards towards horizons that have vanished contains neither thought nor love. At times, Marius clasped his face between his hands, and the vague and tumultuous past traversed the twilight which reigned in his brain. Again he beheld Mabeuf fall, he heard Gavroche singing amid the grape-shot, he felt beneath his lips the cold brow of Éponine; Enjolras, Courfeyrac, Jean Prouvaire, Combeferre, Bossuet, Grantaire, all his friends rose erect before him, then dispersed into thin air. Were all those dear, sorrowful, valiant, charming or tragic beings merely dreams? had they actually existed? The revolt had enveloped everything in its smoke. These great fevers create great dreams. He questioned himself; he felt himself; all these vanished realities made him dizzy. Where were they all then? was it really true that all were dead? A fall into the shadows had carried off all except himself. It all seemed to him to have disappeared as though behind the curtain of a theatre. There are curtains like this which drop in life. God passes on to the following act.

And he himself — was he actually the same man? He, the poor man, was rich; he, the abandoned, had a family; he, the despairing, was to marry Cosette. It seemed to him that he had traversed a tomb, and that he had entered into it black and had emerged from it white, and in that tomb the others had remained. At certain moments, all these beings of the past, returned and present, formed a circle around him, and overshadowed him; then he thought of Cosette, and recovered his serenity; but nothing less than this felicity could have sufficed to efface that catastrophe.

M. Fauchelevent almost occupied a place among these vanished beings. Marius hesitated to believe that the Fauchelevent of the barricade was the same as this Fauchelevent in flesh and blood, sitting so gravely beside Cosette. The first was, probably, one of those nightmares occasioned and brought back by his hours of delirium. However, the natures of both men were rigid, no question from Marius to M. Fauchelevent was possible. Such an idea had not even occurred to him. We have already indicated this characteristic detail.

Two men who have a secret in common, and who, by a sort

of tacit agreement, exchange not a word on the subject, are less rare than is commonly supposed.

Once only, did Marius make the attempt. He introduced into the conversation the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and, turning to M. Fauchelevant, he said to him :

“Of course you are acquainted with that street ?”

“What street ?”

“The Rue de la Chanvrerie.”

“I have no idea of the name of that street,” replied M. Fauchelevant, in the most natural manner in the world.

The response which bore upon the name of the street and not upon the street itself, appeared to Marius to be more conclusive than it really was.

“Decidedly” thought he, “I have been dreaming. I have been subject to a hallucination. It was some one who resembled him. M. Fauchelevant was not there.”

VIII. — TWO MEN IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND.

MARIUS’ enchantment, great as it was, could not efface from his mind other pre-occupations.

While the wedding was in preparation, and while awaiting the date fixed upon, he caused difficult and scrupulous retrospective researches to be made.

He owed gratitude in various quarters ; he owed it on his father’s account, he owed it on his own.

There was Thénardier ; there was the unknown man who had brought him, Marius, back to M. Gillenormand.

Marius endeavored to find these two men, not intending to marry, to be happy, and to forget them, and fearing that, were these debts of gratitude not discharged, they would leave a shadow on his life, which promised so brightly for the future.

It was impossible for him to leave all these arrears of suffering behind him, and he wished, before entering joyously into the future, to obtain a quittance from the past.

That Thénardier was a villain detracted nothing from the fact that he had saved Colonel Pontmercy. Thénardier was a ruffian in the eyes of all the world except Marius.

And Marius, ignorant of the real scene in the battle field of Waterloo, was not aware of the peculiar detail, that his father, so far as Thénardier was concerned, was in the strange position of being indebted to the latter for his life, without being indebted to him for any gratitude.

None of the various agents whom Marius employed suc-

ceeded in discovering any trace of Thénardier. Obliteration appeared to be complete in that quarter. Madame Thénardier had died in prison pending the trial. Thénardier and his daughter Azelma, the only two remaining of that lamentable group, had plunged back into the gloom. The gulf of the social unknown had silently closed above those beings. On the surface there was not visible so much as that quiver, that trembling, those obscure concentric circles which announce that something has fallen in, and that the plummet may be dropped.

Madame Thénardier being dead, Boulatruelle being eliminated from the case, Claquesous having disappeared, the principal persons accused having escaped from prison, the trial connected with the ambush in the Gorbeau house had come to nothing.

That affair had remained rather obscure. The bench of Assizes had been obliged to content themselves with two subordinates. Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille, and Demi-Liard, alias Deux-Milliards, who had been inconsistently condemned, after a hearing of both sides of the case, to ten years in the galleys. Hard labor for life had been the sentence pronounced against the escaped and contumacious accomplices.

Thénardier, the head and leader, had been, through contumacy, likewise condemned to death.

This sentence was the only information remaining about Thénardier, casting upon that buried name its sinister light like a candle beside a bier.

Moreover, by thrusting Thénardier back into the very remotest depths, through a fear of being re-captured, this sentence added to the density of the shadows which enveloped this man.

As for the other person, as for the unknown man who had saved Marius, the researches were at first to some extent successful, then came to an abrupt conclusion. They succeeded in finding the carriage which had brought Marius to the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire on the evening of the 6th of June.

The coachman declared that, on the 6th of June, in obedience to the commands of a police-agent, he had stood from three o'clock in the afternoon until nightfall on the Quai des Champs-Élysées, above the outlet of the Grand Sewer; that, towards nine o'clock in the evening, the grating of the sewer, which abuts on the bank of the river, had opened; that a man had emerged therefrom, bearing on his shoulders another man,

who seemed to be dead; that the agent, who was on the watch at that point, had arrested the living man and had seized the dead man; that, at the order of the police-agent, he, the coachman, had taken "all those folks" into his carriage; that they had first driven to the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire; that they had there deposited the dead man; that the dead man was Monsieur Marius, and that he, the coachman, recognized him perfectly, although he was alive "this time"; that afterwards, they had entered the vehicle again, that he had whipped up his horses; a few paces from the gate of the Archives, they had called to him to halt; that there, in the street, they had paid him and left him, and that the police-agent had led the other man away; that he knew nothing more; that the night had been very dark.

Marius, as we have said, recalled nothing. He only remembered that he had been seized from behind by an energetic hand at the moment when he was falling backwards into the barricade; then, everything vanished so far as he was concerned.

He had only regained consciousness at M. Gillenormand's.

He was lost in conjectures.

He could not doubt his own identity. Still, how had it come to pass that, having fallen in the Rue de la Chanvrière, he had been picked up by the police-agent on the banks of the Seine, near the Pont des Invalides?

Some one had carried him from the Quartier des Halles to the Champs-Élysées. And how? Through the sewer. Unheard-of devotion!

Some one? Who?

This was the man for whom Marius was searching.

Of this man, who was his savior, nothing; not a trace; not the faintest indication.

Marius, although forced to preserve great reserve, in that direction, pushed his inquiries as far as the prefecture of police. There, no more than elsewhere, did the information obtained lead to any enlightenment.

The prefecture knew less about the matter than did the hackney-coachman. They had no knowledge of any arrest having been made on the 6th of June at the mouth of the Grand Sewer.

No report of any agent had been received there upon this matter, which was regarded at the prefecture as a fable. The invention of this fable was attributed to the coachman.

A coachman who wants a gratuity is capable of anything

even of imagination. The fact was assured, nevertheless, and Marius could not doubt it, unless he doubted his own identity, as we have just said.

Everything about this singular enigma was inexplicable.

What had become of that man, that mysterious man, whom the coachman had seen emerge from the grating of the Grand Sewer bearing upon his back the unconscious Marius, and whom the police-agent on the watch had arrested in the very act of rescuing an insurgent? What had become of the agent himself?

Why had this agent preserved silence? Had the man succeeded in making his escape? Had he bribed the agent? Why did this man give no sign of life to Marius, who owed everything to him? His disinterestedness was no less tremendous than his devotion. Why had not that man appeared again? Perhaps he was above compensation, but no one is above gratitude. Was he dead? Who was the man? What sort of a face had he? No one could tell him this.

The coachman answered: "The night was very dark." Basque and Nicolette, all in a flutter, had looked only at their young master all covered with blood.

The porter, whose candle had lighted the tragic arrival of Marius, had been the only one to take note of the man in question, and this is the description that he gave:

"That man was terrible."

Marius had the blood-stained clothing which he had worn when he had been brought back to his grandfather preserved, in the hope that it would prove of service in his researches.

On examining the coat, it was found that one skirt had been torn in a singular way. A piece was missing.

One evening, Marius was speaking in the presence of Co-sette and Jean Valjean of the whole of that singular adventure, of the innumerable inquiries which he had made, and of the fruitlessness of his efforts. The cold countenance of "Monsieur Fauchelevent" angered him.

He exclaimed, with a vivacity which had something of wrath in it:

"Yes, that man, whoever he may have been, was sublime. Do you know what he did, sir? He intervened like an archangel. He must have flung himself into the midst of the battle, have stolen me away, have opened the sewer, have dragged me into it, and have carried me through it! He must have traversed more than a league and a half in those frightful subterranean galleries, bent over, weighed down, in

the dark, in the cess-pool, — more than a league and a half, sir, with a corpse upon his back! And with what object? With the sole object of saving the corpse. And that corpse I was. He said to himself: ‘There may still be a glimpse of life there, perchance; I will risk my own existence for that miserable spark!’ And his existence he risked not once but twenty times! And every step was a danger. The proof of it is, that on emerging from the sewer, he was arrested. Do you know, sir, that that man did all this? And he had no recompense to expect. What was I? An insurgent. What was I? One of the conquered. Oh! if Cosette’s six hundred thousand francs were mine . . .”

“They are yours,” interrupted Jean Valjean.

“Well,” resumed Marius, “I would give them all to find that man once more.”

Jean Valjean remained silent.



BOOK SIXTH.—THE SLEEPLESS NIGHT.

I.—THE 16TH OF FEBRUARY, 1833.

THE night of the 16th to the 17th of February, 1833, was a blessed night. Above its shadows heaven stood open. It was the wedding night of Marius and Cosette.

The day had been adorable.

It had not been the grand festival dreamed by the grandfather, a fairy spectacle, with a confusion of cherubim and Cupids over the heads of the bridal pair, a marriage worthy to form the subject of a painting to be placed over a door; but it had been sweet and smiling.

The manner of marriage in 1833 was not the same as it is to-day. France had not yet borrowed from England that supreme delicacy of carrying off one’s wife, of fleeing, on coming out of church, of hiding oneself with shame from one’s happiness, and of combining the ways of a bankrupt with the delights of the Song of Songs. People had not yet grasped to the full the chastity, exquisiteness, and decency of jolting their paradise in a posting-chaise, of breaking up their mystery with clic-clacs, of taking for a nuptial bed the bed of

an inn, and of leaving behind them, in a commonplace chamber, at so much a night, the most sacred of the souvenirs of life mingled pell-mell with the tête-à-tête of the conductor of the diligence and the maid-servant of the inn.

In this second half of the nineteenth-century in which we are now living, the mayor and his scarf, the priest and his chasuble, the law and God no longer suffice; they must be eked out by the Postilion de Lonjumeau; a blue waistcoat turned up with red, and with bell buttons, a plaque like a vantbrace, knee-breeches of green leather, oaths to the Norman horses with their tails knotted up, false galloons, varnished hat, long powdered locks, an enormous whip and tall boots. France does not yet carry elegance to the length of doing like the English nobility, and raining down on the post-chaise of the bridal pair a hail storm of slippers trodden down at heel and of worn-out shoes, in memory of Churchill, afterwards Marlborough, or Malbrouck, who was assailed on his wedding-day by the wrath of an aunt which brought him good luck. Old shoes and slippers do not, as yet, form a part of our nuptial celebrations; but patience, as good taste continues to spread, we shall come to that.

In 1833, a hundred years ago, marriage was not conducted at a full trot.

Strange to say, at that epoch, people still imagined that a wedding was a private and social festival, that a patriarchal banquet does not spoil a domestic solemnity, that gayety, even in excess, provided it be honest, and decent, does happiness no harm, and that, in short, it is a good and a venerable thing that the fusion of these two destinies whence a family is destined to spring, should begin at home, and that the household should thenceforth have its nuptial chamber as its witness.

And people were so immodest as to marry in their own homes.

The marriage took place, therefore, in accordance with this now superannuated fashion, at M. Gillenormand's house.

Natural and commonplace as this matter of marrying is, the banns to publish, the papers to be drawn up, the mayoralty, and the church produce some complication. They could not get ready before the 16th of February.

Now, we note this detail, for the pure satisfaction of being exact, it chanced that the 16th fell on Shrove Tuesday. Hesitations, scruples, particularly on the part of Aunt Gillenormand.

"Shrove Tuesday!" exclaimed the grandfather, "so much the better. There is a proverb:

"*'Mariage un Mardi gras
N'aura point enfants ingrats.'*"¹

Let us proceed. Here goes for the 16th! Do you want to delay, Marius?"

"No, certainly not!" replied the lover.

"Let us marry then," cried the grandfather.

Accordingly, the marriage took place on the 16th, notwithstanding the public merrymaking. It rained that day, but there is always in the sky a tiny scrap of blue at the service of happiness, which lovers see, even when the rest of creation is under an umbrella.

On the preceding evening, Jean Valjean handed to Marius, in the presence of M. Gillenormand, the five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs.

As the marriage was taking place under the régime of community of property, the papers had been simple.

Henceforth, Toussaint was of no use to Jean Valjean; Cosette inherited her and promoted her to the rank of lady's maid.

As for Jean Valjean, a beautiful chamber in the Gillenormand house had been furnished expressly for him, and Cosette had said to him in such an irresistible manner: "Father, I entreat you," that she had almost persuaded him to promise that he would come and occupy it.

A few days before that fixed on for the marriage, an accident happened to Jean Valjean; he crushed the thumb of his right hand. This was not a serious matter; and he had not allowed any one to trouble himself about it, nor to dress it, nor even to see his hurt, not even Cosette. Nevertheless, this had forced him to swathe his hand in a linen bandage, and to carry his arm in a sling, and had prevented his signing. M. Gillenormand, in his capacity of Cosette's supervising-guardian, had supplied his place.

We will not conduct the reader either to the mayor's office or to the church. One does not follow a pair of lovers to that extent, and one is accustomed to turn one's back on the drama as soon as it puts a wedding nosegay in its buttonhole. We will confine ourselves to noting an incident which, though

¹ "A Shrove-Tuesday marriage will have no ungrateful children."

unnoticed by the wedding party, marked the transit from the Rue de Filles-du-Calvaire to the church of Saint-Paul.

At that epoch, the northern extremity of the Rue Saint-Louis was in process of repaving. It was barred off, beginning with the Rue du Parc-Royal. It was impossible for the wedding carriages to go directly to Saint-Paul. They were obliged to alter their course, and the simplest way was to turn through the boulevard. One of the invited guests observed that it was Shrove Tuesday, and that there would be a jam of vehicles. — "Why?" asked M. Gillenormand. — "Because of the maskers." — "Capital," said the grandfather, "let us go that way. These young folks are on the way to be married; they are about to enter the serious part of life. This will prepare them for seeing a bit of the masquerade."

They went by way of the boulevard. The first wedding coach held Cosette and Aunt Gillenormand, M. Gillenormand, and Jean Valjean. Marius, still separated from his betrothed, according to usage, did not come until the second. The nuptial train, on emerging from the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire, became entangled in a long procession of vehicles which formed an endless chain from the Madeleine to the Bastille, and from the Bastille to the Madeleine. Maskers abounded on the boulevard. In spite of the fact that it was raining at intervals, Merry-andrew, Pantaloon and Clown persisted. In the good humor of that winter of 1833, Paris had disguised itself as Venice. Such Shrove Tuesdays are no longer to be seen now-a-days. Everything which exists being a scattered Carnival, there is no longer any Carnival.

The sidewalks were overflowing with pedestrians and the windows with curious spectators. The terraces which crown the peristyles of the theatres were bordered with spectators. Besides the maskers, they stared at that procession — peculiar to Shrove Tuesday as to Longchamps, — of vehicles of every description, citadines, tapissières, carioles, cabriolets marching in order, rigorously riveted to each other by the police regulations, and locked into rails, as it were. Any one in these vehicles is at once a spectator and a spectacle. Police-sergeants maintained, on the sides of the boulevard, these two interminable parallel files, moving in contrary directions, and saw to it that nothing interfered with that double current, those two brooks of carriages, flowing, the one down stream, the other up stream, the one towards the Chaussée d'Antin, the other towards the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. The carriages of the peers of France and of the Ambassadors, em-

blazoned with coats of arms, held the middle of the way, going and coming freely. Certain joyous and magnificent trains, notably that of the Bœuf Gras, had the same privilege. In this gayety of Paris, England cracked her whip; Lord Seymour's post-chaise, harassed by a nickname from the populace, passed with great noise.

In the double file, along which the municipal guards galloped like sheep-dogs, honest family coaches, loaded down with great-aunts and grandmothers, displayed at their doors fresh groups of children in disguise, Clowns of seven years of age, Columbines of six, ravishing little creatures, who felt that they formed an official part of the public mirth, who were imbued with the dignity of their harlequinade, and who possessed the gravity of functionaries.

From time to time, a hitch arose somewhere in the procession of vehicles; one or other of the two lateral files halted until the knot was disentangled; one carriage delayed sufficed to paralyze the whole line. Then they set out again on the march.

The wedding carriages were in the file proceeding towards the Bastille, and skirting the right side of the boulevard. At the top of the Pont-aux-Choux, there was a stoppage. Nearly at the same moment, the other file, which was proceeding towards the Madeleine, halted also. At that point of the file there was a carriage-load of maskers.

These carriages, or to speak more correctly, these wagon-loads of maskers are very familiar to Parisians. If they were missing on a Shrove Tuesday, or at the Mid-Lent, it would be taken in bad part, and people would say: "There's something behind that. Probably the ministry is about to undergo a change." A pile of Cassandras, Harlequins and Columbines, jolted along high above the passers-by, all possible grotesquenesses, from the Turk to the savage, Hercules supporting Marquises, fishwives who would have made Rabelais stop up his ears just as the Mœnads made Aristophanes drop his eyes, tow wigs, pink tights, dandified hats, spectacles of a grimacer, three-cornered hats of Janot tormented with a butterfly, shouts directed at pedestrians, fists on hips, bold attitudes, bare shoulders, immodesty unchained; a chaos of shamelessness driven by a coachman crowned with flowers; this is what that institution was like.

Greece stood in need of the chariot of Thespis, France stands in need of the hackney-coach of Vadé.

Everything can be parodied, even parody. The Saturnalia,

that grimace of antique beauty, ends, through exaggeration after exaggeration, in Shrove Tuesday ; and the Bacchanal, formerly crowned with sprays of vine leaves and grapes, inundated with sunshine, displaying her marble breasts in a divine semi-nudity, having at the present day lost her shape under the soaked rags of the North, has finally come to be called the Jack-pudding.

The tradition of carriage-loads of maskers runs back to the most ancient days of the monarchy. The accounts of Louis XI. allot to the bailiff of the palace "twenty sous, Tournois, for three coaches of mascarades in the cross-roads." In our day, these noisy heaps of creatures are accustomed to have themselves driven in some ancient cuckoo carriage, whose imperial they load down, or they overwhelm a hired landau, with its top thrown back, with their tumultuous groups. Twenty of them ride in a carriage intended for six. They cling to the seats, to the rumble, on the cheeks of the hood, on the shafts. They even bestride the carriage lamps. They stand, sit, lie, with their knees drawn up in a knot, and their legs hanging. The women sit on the men's laps. Far away, above the throng of heads, their wild pyramid is visible. These carriage-loads form mountains of mirth in the midst of the rout. Collé, Panard and Piron flow from it, enriched with slang. This carriage which has become colossal through its freight, has an air of conquest. Uproar reigns in front, tumult behind. People vociferate, shout, howl, there they break forth and writhe with enjoyment; gayety roars; sarcasm flames forth, joviality is flaunted like a red flag; two jades there drag farce blossomed forth into an apotheosis ; it is the triumphal car of laughter.

A laughter that is too cynical to be frank. In truth, this laughter is suspicious. This laughter has a mission. It is charged with proving the Carnival to the Parisians.

These fishwife vehicles, in which one feels one knows not what shadows, set the philosopher to thinking. There is government therein. There one lays one's finger on a mysterious affinity between public men and public women.

It certainly is sad that turpitude heaped up should give a sum total of gayety, that by piling ignominy upon opprobrium the people should be enticed, that the system of spying, and serving as caryatids to prostitution should amuse the rabble when it confronts them, that the crowd loves to behold that monstrous living pile of tinsel rags, half dung, half light, roll by on four wheels howling and laughing, that they should

clap their hands at this glory composed of all shames, that there would be no festivals for the populace, did not the police promenade in their midst these sorts twenty-headed of hydras of joy. But what can be done about it? These be-ribboned and be-flowered tumbrils of mire are insulted and pardoned by the laughter of the public. The laughter of all is the accomplice of universal degradation. Certain unhealthy festivals disaggregate the people and convert them into the populace. And populaces, like tyrants, require buffoons. The King has Roquelaure, the populace has the Merry-Andrew. Paris is a great, mad city on every occasion that it is a great sublime city. There the Carnival forms part of politics. Paris, — let us confess it — willingly allows infamy to furnish it with comedy. She only demands of her masters — when she has masters — one thing: "Paint me the mud." Rome was of the same mind. She loved Nero. Nero was a titanic lighterman.

Chance ordained, as we have just said, that one of these shapeless clusters of masked men and women, dragged about on a vast calash, should halt on the left of the boulevard, while the wedding train halted on the right. The carriage-load of masks caught sight of the wedding carriage containing the bridal party opposite them on the other side of the boulevard.

"Hullo!" said a masker, "here's a wedding."

"A sham wedding," retorted another. "We are the genuine article."

And, being too far off to accost the wedding party, and fearing also, the rebuke of the police, the two maskers turned their eyes elsewhere,

At the end of another minute, the carriage-load of maskers had their hands full, the multitude set to yelling, which is the crowd's caress to masquerades; and the two maskers who had just spoken had to face the throng with their comrades, and did not find the entire repertory of projectiles of the fish-markets too extensive to retort to the enormous verbal attacks of the populace. A frightful exchange of metaphors took place between the maskers and the crowd.

In the meanwhile, two other maskers in the same carriage, a Spaniard with an enormous nose, an elderly air, and huge black moustache, and a gaunt fishwife, who was quite a young girl, masked with a *loup*,¹ had also noticed the wedding, and while their companions and the passers-by were exchanging insults, they had held a dialogue in a low voice.

¹ A short mask.

Their aside was covered by the tumult and was lost in it. The gusts of rain had drenched the front of the vehicle, which was wide open; the breezes of February are not warm; as the fishwife, clad in a low-necked gown, replied to the Spaniard, she shivered, laughed and coughed.

Here is their dialogue:

"Say now."

"What, daddy?"

"Do you see that old cove?"

"What old cove?"

"Yonder, in the first wedding-cart, on our side."

"The one with his arm hung up in a black cravat?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"I'm sure that I know him."

"Ah!"

"I'm willing that they should cut my throat, and I'm ready to swear that I never said either you, thou, or I, in my life, if I don't know that Parisian." [*pantinois.*]

"Paris in Pantin to-day."

"Can you see the bride if you stoop down?"

"No."

"And the bridegroom?"

"There's no bridegroom in that trap."

"Bah!"

"Unless it's the old fellow."

"Try to get a sight of the bride by stooping very low."

"I can't."

"Never mind, that old cove who has something the matter with his paw I know, and that I'm positive."

"And what good does it do to know him?"

"No one can tell. Sometimes it does!"

"I don't care a hang for old fellows, that I don't!"

"I know him."

"Know him, if you want to."

"How the devil does he come to be one of the wedding-party?"

"We are in it too."

"Where does that wedding come from?"

"How should I know?"

"Listen."

"Well, what?"

"There's one thing you ought to do."

"What's that?"

"Get off of our trap and spin that wedding."

"What for?"

"To find out where it goes, and what it is. Hurry up and jump down, trot, my girl, your legs are young."

"I can't quit the vehicle."

"Why not?"

"I'm hired."

"Ah, the devil!"

"I owe my fish-wife day to the prefecture."

"That's true."

"If I leave the cart, the first inspector who gets his eye on me will arrest me. You know that well enough."

"Yes I do."

"I'm bought by the government for to-day."

"All the same, that old fellow bothers me."

"Do the old fellows bother you? But you're not a young girl."

"He's in the first carriage."

"Well?"

"In the bride's trap."

"What then?"

"So he is the father."

"What concern is that of mine?"

"I tell you that he's the father."

• "As if he were the only father."

"Listen."

"What?"

"I can't go out otherwise than masked. Here I'm concealed, no one knows that I'm here. But to-morrow, there will be no more maskers. It's Ash Wednesday. I run the risk of being nabbed. I must sneak back into my hole. But you are free."

"Not particularly."

"More than I am, at any rate."

"Well, what of that?"

"You must try to find out where that wedding-party went to."

"Where it went?"

"Yes."

"I know."

"Where is it going then?"

"To the Cadran-Bleu."

"In the first place, it's not in that direction."

"Well! to la Rapée."

"Or elsewhere."

"It's free. Wedding-parties are at liberty."

"That's not the point at all. I tell you that you must try to learn for me what that wedding is, who that old cove belongs to, and where that wedding pair lives."

"I like that! that would be queer. It's so easy to find out a wedding-party that passed through the street on a Shrove Tuesday, a week afterwards. A pin in a hay-mow! It ain't possible!"

"That don't matter. You must try. You understand me, Azelma."

The two files resumed their movement on both sides of the boulevard, in opposite directions, and the carriage of the maskers lost sight of the "trap" of the bride.

II.—JEAN VALJEAN STILL WEARS HIS ARM IN A SLING.

To realize one's dream. To whom is this accorded? There must be elections for this in heaven; we are all candidates, unknown to ourselves; the angels vote. Cosette and Marius had been elected.

Cosette, both at the mayor's office and at church, was dazzling and touching. Toussaint, assisted by Nicolette, had dressed her.

Cosette wore over a petticoat of white taffeta, her robe of Binche guipure, a veil of English point, a necklace of fine pearls, a wreath of orange flowers; all this was white, and, from the midst of that whiteness she beamed forth. It was an exquisite candor expanding and becoming transfigured in the light. One would have pronounced her a virgin on the point of turning into a goddess.

Marius' handsome hair was lustrous and perfumed; here and there, beneath the thick curls, pale lines—the scars of the barricade—were visible.

The grandfather, haughty, with head held high, amalgamating more than ever in his toilet and his manners all the elegances of the epoch of Barras, escorted Cosette. He took the place of Jean Valjean, who, on account of his arm being still in a sling, could not give his hand to the bride.

Jean Valjean, dressed in black, followed them with a smile.

"Monsieur Fauchelevent," said the grandfather to him, "this is a fine day. I vote for the end of afflictions and sorrows. Henceforth, there must be no sadness anywhere. Par-

dieu, I decree joy! Evil has no right to exist. That there should be any unhappy men is, in sooth, a disgrace to the azure of the sky. Evil does not come from man, who is good at bottom. All human miseries have for their capital and central government hell, otherwise known as the Devil's Tuileries. Good, here I am uttering demagogical words! As far as I am concerned, I have no longer any political opinions; let all men be rich, that is to say, mirthful, and I confine myself to that."

When, at the conclusion of all the ceremonies, after having pronounced before the mayor and before the priest all possible "yeses," after having signed the registers at the municipality and at the sacristy, after having exchanged their rings, after having knelt side by side under the pall of white moire in the smoke of the censer, they arrived, hand in hand, admired and envied by all, Marius in black, she in white, preceded by the suisse, with the epaulets of a colonel, tapping the pavement with his halberd, between two rows of astonished spectators, at the portals of the church, both leaves of which were thrown wide open, ready to enter their carriage again, and all being finished, Cosette still could not believe that it was real. She looked at Marius, she looked at the crowd, she looked at the sky: it seemed as though she feared that she should wake up from her dream. Her amazed and uneasy air added something indescribably enchanting to her beauty. They entered the same carriage to return home, Marius beside Cosette; M. Gillenormand and Jean Valjean sat opposite them; Aunt Gillenormand had withdrawn one degree, and was in the second vehicle.

"My children," said the grandfather, "here you are, Monsieur le Baron and Madame la Baronne, with an income of thirty thousand livres."

And Cosette, nestling close to Marius, caressed his ear with an angelic whisper: "So it is true. My name is Marius. I am Madame Thou."

These two creatures were resplendent. They had reached that irrevocable and irrecoverable moment, at the dazzling intersection of all youth and all joy. They realized the verses of Jean Prouvaire; they were forty years old taken together. It was marriage sublimated; these two children were two lilies. They did not see each other, they did not contemplate each other. Cosette perceived Marius in the midst of a glory; Marius perceived Cosette on an altar. And on that altar, and in that glory, the two apotheoses mingling, in the

background, one knows not how, behind a cloud for Cosette, in a flash for Marius, there was the ideal thing, the real thing, the meeting of the kiss and the dream, the nuptial pillow. All the torments through which they had passed, came back to them in intoxication. It seemed to them that their sorrows, their sleepless nights, their tears, their anguish, their terrors, their despair, converted into caresses and rays of light, rendered still more charming the charming hour which was approaching; and that their griefs were but so many hand-maidens who were preparing the toilet of joy. How good it is to have suffered! Their unhappiness formed a halo round their happiness. The long agony of their love was terminating in an ascension.

It was the same enchantment in two souls, tinged with voluptuousness in Marius, and with modesty in Cosette. They said to each other in low tones: "We will go back to take a look at our little garden in the Rue Plumet." The folds of Cosette's gown lay across Marius.

Such a day is an ineffable mixture of dream and of reality. One possesses and one supposes. One still has time before one to divine. The emotion on that day, of being at mid-day and of dreaming of midnight is indescribable. The delights of these two hearts overflowed upon the crowd, and inspired the passers-by with cheerfulness.

People halted in the Rue Saint-Antoine, in front of Saint-Paul, to gaze through the windows of the carriage at the orange-flowers quivering on Cosette's head.

Then they returned home to the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire. Marius, triumphant and radiant, mounted side by side with Cosette the staircase up which he had been borne in a dying condition. The poor, who had trooped to the door, and who shared their purses, blessed them. There were flowers everywhere. The house was no less fragrant than the church; after the incense, roses. They thought they heard voices carolling in the infinite; they had God in their hearts; destiny appeared to them like a ceiling of stars; above their heads they beheld the light of a rising sun. All at once, the clock struck. Marius glanced at Cosette's charming bare arm, and at the rosy things which were vaguely visible through the lace of her bodice, and Cosette, intercepting Marius' glance, blushed to her very hair.

Quite a number of old family friends of the Gillenormand family had been invited; they pressed about Cosette. Each one vied with the rest in saluting her as Madame la Baronne.

The officer, Théodule Gillenormand, now a captain, had come from Chartres, where he was stationed in garrison, to be present at the wedding of his cousin Pontmercy. Cosette did not recognize him.

He, on his side, habituated as he was to have women consider him handsome, retained no more recollection of Cosette than of any other woman.

"How right I was not to believe in that story about the lancer!" said Father Gillenormand to himself.

Cosette had never been more tender with Jean Valjean. She was in unison with Father Gillenormand; while he erected joy into aphorisms and maxims, she exhaled goodness like a perfume. Happiness desires that all the world should be happy.

She regained, for the purpose of addressing Jean Valjean, inflections of voice belonging to the time when she was a little girl. She caressed him with her smile.

A banquet had been spread in the dining-room.

Illumination as brilliant as the daylight, is the necessary seasoning of a great joy. Mist and obscurity are not accepted by the happy. They do not consent to be black. The night, yes: the shadows, no. If there is no sun, one must be made.

The dining-room was full of gay things. In the centre, above the white and glittering table, was a Venetian lustre with flat plates, with all sorts of colored birds, blue, violet, red, and green, perched amid the candles; around the chandelier, girandoles, on the walls, sconces with triple and quintuple branches; mirrors, silver-ware, glass-ware, plate, porcelain, faience, pottery, gold and silversmith's work, all was sparkling and gay. The empty spaces between the candelabra were filled in with bouquets, so that, where there was not a light, there was a flower.

In the antechamber, three violins and a flute softly played quartettes by Haydn.

Jean Valjean had seated himself on a chair in the drawing-room, behind the door, the leaf of which folded back upon him in such a manner as to nearly conceal him. A few moments before they sat down to table, Cosette came, as though inspired by a sudden whim, and made him a deep curtsy, spreading out her bridal toilet with both hands, and with a tenderly roguish glance, she asked him:

"Father, are you satisfied?"

"Yes," said Jean Valjean, "I am content."

"Well, then, laugh."

Jean Valjean began to laugh.

A few moments later, Basque announced that dinner was served.

The guests, preceded by M. Gillenormand with Cosette on his arm, entered the dining-room, and arranged themselves in the proper order around the table.

Two large arm-chairs figured on the right and left of the bride, the first for M. Gillenormand, the other for Jean Valjean. M. Gillenormand took his seat. The other arm-chair remained empty.

They looked about for M. Fauchelevent.

He was no longer there.

M. Gillenormand questioned Basque.

"Do you know where M. Fauchelevent is?"

"Sir," replied Basque, "I do, precisely. M. Fauchelevent told me to say to you, sir, that he was suffering, his injured hand was paining him somewhat, and that he could not dine with Monsieur le Baron and Madame la Baronne. That he begged to be excused, that he would come tomorrow. He has just taken his departure."

That empty arm-chair chilled the effusion of the wedding feast for a moment. But, if M. Fauchelevent was absent, M. Gillenormand was present, and the grandfather beamed for two. He affirmed that M. Fauchelevent had done well to retire early, if he were suffering, but that it was only a slight ailment. This declaration sufficed. Moreover, what is an obscure corner in such a submersion of joy? Cosette and Marius were passing through one of those egotistical and blessed moments, when no other faculty is left to a person than that of receiving happiness. And then, an idea occurred to M. Gillenormand. — "Pardieu, this armchair is empty. Come hither, Marius. Your aunt will permit it, although she has a right to you. This armchair is for you. That is legal and delightful. Fortunatus beside Fortunata." — Applause from the whole table. Marius took Jean Valjean's place beside Cosette, and things fell out so that Cosette, who had, at first, been saddened by Jean Valjean's absence, ended by being satisfied with it. From the moment when Marius took his place, and was the substitute, Cosette would not have regretted God himself. She set her sweet little foot, shod in white satin, on Marius' foot.

The armchair being occupied, M. Fauchelevent was obliterated; and nothing was lacking.

And, five minutes afterwards, the whole table, from one end

to the other, was laughing with all the animation of forgetfulness.

At dessert, M. Gillenormand rising to his feet, with a glass of champagne in his hand — only half full so that the palsy of his eighty years might not cause an overflow, — proposed the health of the married pair.

“You shall not escape two sermons,” he exclaimed. “This morning, you had one from the curé, this evening you shall have one from your grandfather. Listen to me; I will give you a bit of advice: Adore each other. I do not make a pack of gyrations, I go straight to the mark, be happy. In all creation, only the turtle-doves are wise. Philosophers say: ‘Moderate your joys.’ I say: ‘Give rein to your joys.’ Be as much smitten with each other as fiends. Be in a rage about it. The philosophers talk stuff and nonsense. I should like to stuff their philosophy down their gullets again. Can there be too many perfumes, too many open rose-buds, too many nightingales singing, too many green leaves, too much aurora in life? can people love each other too much? can people please each other too much? Take care, Estelle, thou art too pretty! Have a care, Nemorin, thou art too handsome! Fine stupidity, in sooth! Can people enchant each other too much, cajole each other too much, charm each other too much? can one be too much alive, too happy? Moderate your joys. Ah, indeed! Down with the philosophers! Wisdom consists in jubilation. Make merry, let us make merry. Are we happy because we are good, or are we good because we are happy? Is the Sancy diamond called the Sancy because it belonged to Harley de Sancy, or because it weighs six hundred carats? I know nothing about it, life is full of such problems; the important point is to possess the Sancy and happiness. Let us be happy without quibbling and quirking. Let us obey the sun blindly. What is the sun? It is love. He who says love, says woman. Ah! ah! behold omnipotence — women. Ask that demagogue of a Marius if he is not the slave of that little tyrant of a Cosette. And of his own free will, too, the coward! Woman! There is no Robespierre who keeps his place, but woman reigns. I am no longer Royalist except towards that royalty. What is Adam? The kingdom of Eve. No ’89 for Eve. There has been the royal sceptre surmounted by a fleur de lys, there has been the imperial sceptre surmounted by a globe, there has been the sceptre of Charlemagne, which was of iron, there has been the sceptre of Louis the Great, which was of gold, — the revolution twisted them between its thumb

and forefinger, ha'penny straws; it is done with, it is broken it lies on the earth, there is no longer any sceptre, but make me a revolution against that little embroidered handkerchief, which smells of patchouli! I should like to see you do it. Try. Why is it so solid? Because it is a gewgaw. Ah! you are the nineteenth century? Well, what then? And we have been as foolish as you. Do not imagine that you have effected much change in the universe, because your trip-gallant is called the cholera-morbus, and because your *pourrée* is called the cachuca. In fact, the women must always be loved. I defy you to escape from that. These friends are our angels. Yes, love, woman, the kiss forms a circle from which I defy you to escape; and, for my own part, I should be only too happy to re-enter it. Which of you has seen the planet Venus, the coquette of the abyss, the Célimène of the ocean, rise in the infinite, calming all here below? The ocean is a rough Alcestis. Well, grumble as he will, when Venus appears he is forced to smile. That brute beast submits. We are all made so. Wrath, tempest, claps of thunder, foam to the very ceiling. A woman enters on the scene, a planet rises; flat on your face! Marius was fighting six months ago; today he is married. That is well. Yes, Marius, yes, Cosette, you are in the right. Exist boldly for each other, make us burst with rage that we cannot do the same, idealize each other, catch in your beaks all the tiny blades of felicity that exist on earth, and arrange yourselves a nest for life. Pardi, to love, to be loved, what a fine miracle when one is young! Don't imagine that you have invented that. I too, have had my dream, I too have meditated, I too have sighed; I too, have had a moonlight soul. Love is a child six thousand years old. Love has the right to a long white beard. Methusalem is a street arab beside Cupid. For sixty centuries, men and women have got out of their scrape by loving. The devil, who is cunning, took to hating man; man, who is still more cunning, took to loving woman. In this way he does more good than the devil does him harm. This craft was discovered in the days of the terrestrial paradise. The invention is old, my friends, but it is perfectly new. Profit by it. Be Daphnis, and Chloe, while waiting to become Philemon and Baucis. Manage so that, when you are with each other, nothing shall be lacking to you, and that Cosette may be the sun for Marius, and that Marius may be the universe to Cosette. Cosette, let your fine weather be the smile of your husband; Marius, let your rain be your wife's tears.

And let it never rain in your household. You have filched the winning number in the lottery; you have gained the great prize, guard it well, keep it under lock and key, do not squander it, adore each other and snap your fingers at all the rest. Believe what I say to you. It is good sense. And good sense cannot lie. Be a religion to each other. Each man has his own fashion of adoring God. Saperlotte! the best way to adore God is to love one's wife. *I love thee!* that's my catechism. He who loves is orthodox. The oath of Henri IV. places sanctity somewhere between feasting and drunkenness. *Ventre-saint-gris!* I don't belong to the religion of that oath. Woman is forgotten in it. This astonishes me on the part of Henri IV. My friends, long live women! I am old, they say: it's astonishing how much I feel in the mood to be young. I should like to go and listen to the bagpipes in the woods. Children who contrive to be beautiful and contented,—that intoxicates me. I would like greatly to get married, if any one would have me. It is impossible to imagine that God could have made us for anything but this: to idolize, to coo, to preen ourselves, to be dove-like, to be dainty, to bill and coo our loves from morn to night, to gaze at one's image in one's little wife, to be proud, to be triumphant to plume oneself; that is the aim of life. There, let not that displease you which we used to think in our day, when we were young folks. Ah! *vertu-bamboche!* what charming women there were in those days, and what pretty little faces and what lovely lasses! I committed my ravages among them. Then love each other. If people did not love each other, I really do not see what use there would be in having any springtime; and for my own part, I should pray the good God to shut up all the beautiful things that he shows us, and to take away from us and put back in his box, the flowers, the birds, and the pretty maidens. My children, receive an old man's blessing."

The evening was gay, lively and agreeable. The grandfather's sovereign good humor gave the key-note to the whole feast, and each person regulated his conduct on that almost centenarian cordiality. They danced a little, they laughed a great deal; it was an amiable wedding. Goodman Days of Yore might have been invited to it. However, he was present in the person of Father Gillenormand.

There was a tumult, then silence.

The married pair disappeared.

A little after midnight, the Gillenormand house became a temple.

Here we pause. On the threshold of wedding nights stands a smiling angel with his finger on his lips.

The soul enters into contemplation before that sanctuary where the celebration of love takes place:

There should be flashes of light athwart such houses. The joy which they contain ought to make its escape through the stones of the walls in brilliancy, and vaguely illuminate the gloom. It is impossible that this sacred and fatal festival should not give off a celestial radiance to the infinite. Love is the sublime crucible wherein the fusion of the man and the woman takes place; the being one, the being triple, the being final, the human trinity proceeds from it. This birth of two souls into one, ought to be an emotion for the gloom. The lover is the priest; the ravished virgin is terrified. Something of that joy ascends to God. Where true marriage is, that is to say, where there is love, the ideal enters in. A nuptial bed makes a nook of dawn amid the shadows. If it were given to the eye of the flesh to scan the formidable and charming visions of the upper life, it is probable that we should behold the forms of night, the winged unknowns, the blue passers of the invisible, bend down, a throng of sombre heads, around the luminous house, satisfied, showering benedictions, pointing out to each other the virgin wife gently alarmed, sweetly terrified, and bearing the reflection of human bliss upon their divine countenances. If at that supreme hour, the wedded pair, dazzled with voluptuousness and believing themselves alone were to listen, they would hear in their chamber a confused rustling of wings. Perfect happiness implies a mutual understanding with the angels. That dark little chamber has all heaven for its ceiling. When two mouths, rendered sacred by love, approach to create, it is impossible, that there should not be, above that ineffable kiss, a quivering throughout the immense mystery of stars.

These felicities are the true ones. There is no joy outside of these joys. Love is the only ecstasy. All the rest weeps.

To love, or to have loved, — this suffices. Demand nothing more. There is no other pearl to be found in the shadowy folds of life. To love is a fulfilment.

III. — THE INSEPARABLE.

WHAT had become of Jean Valjean?

Immediately after having laughed, at Cosette's graceful command, when no one was paying any heed to him, Jean Val-

jean had risen, and had gained the antechamber unperceived. This was the very room which, eight months before, he had entered black with mud, with blood and powder, bringing back the grandson to the grandfather. The old wainscoting was garlanded with foliage and flowers; the musicians were seated on the sofa on which they had laid Marius down. Basque, in a black coat, knee-breeches, white stockings and white gloves, was arranging roses round all of the dishes that were to be served. Jean Valjean pointed to his arm in its sling, charged Basque to explain his absence, and went away.

The long windows of the dining-room opened on the street. Jean Valjean stood for several minutes, erect and motionless in the darkness, beneath those radiant windows. He listened. The confused sounds of the banquet reached his ear. He heard the loud, commanding tones of the grandfather, the violins, the clatter of the plates, the bursts of laughter, and through all that merry uproar, he distinguished Cosette's sweet and joyous voice.

He quitted the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire, and returned to the Rue de l'Homme Armé.

In order to return thither, he took the Rue Saint Louis, the Rue Culture-Sainte-Catherine, and the Blancs-Manteaux; it was a little longer, but it was the road through which, for the last three months, he had become accustomed to pass every day on his way from the Rue de l'Homme Armé to the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire, in order to avoid the obstructions and the mud in the Rue Vielle-du-Temple.

This road, through which Cosette had passed, excluded for him, all possibility of any other itinerary.

Jean Valjean entered his lodgings. He lighted his candle and mounted the stairs. The apartment was empty. Even Toussaint was no longer there. Jean Valjean's step made more noise than usual in the chambers. All the cupboards stood open. He penetrated to Cosette's bedroom. There were no sheets on the bed. The pillow, covered with ticking, and without a case or lace, was laid on the blankets folded up on the foot of the mattress, whose covering was visible, and on which no one was ever to sleep again. All the little feminine objects which Cosette was attached to, had been carried away; nothing remained except the heavy furniture and the four walls. Toussaint's bed was despoiled in like manner. One bed only was made up, and seemed to be awaiting some one, and this was Jean Valjean's bed.

Jean Valjean looked at the walls, closed some of the

cupboard doors, and went and came from one room to another.

Then he sought his own chamber once more, and set his candle on a table.

He had disengaged his arm from the sling, and he used his right hand as though it did not hurt him.

He approached his bed, and his eyes rested, was it by chance? was it intentionally? on the *inseparable* of which Cosette had been jealous, on the little portmanteau which never left him. On his arrival in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, on the 4th of June, he had deposited it on a round table near the head of his bed. He went to this table with a sort of vivacity, took a key from his pocket, and opened the valise.

From it he slowly drew forth the garments in which, ten years before, Cosette had quitted Montfermeil; first the little gown, then the black fichu, then the stout, coarse child's shoes which Cosette might almost have worn still, so tiny were her feet, then the fustian bodice, which was very thick, then the knitted petticoat, next the apron with pockets, then the woollen stockings. These stockings, which still preserved the graceful form of a tiny leg, were no longer than Jean Valjean's hand. All this was black of hue. It was he who had brought those garments to Montfermeil for her. As he removed them from the valise, he laid them on the bed. He fell to thinking. He called up memories. It was in winter, in a very cold month of December, she was shivering, half-naked, in rags, her poor little feet were all red in their wooden shoes. He, Jean Valjean, had made her abandon those rags to clothe herself in these mourning habiliments. The mother must have felt pleased in her grave, to see her daughter wearing mourning for her, and, above all, to see that she was properly clothed, and that she was warm. He thought of that forest of Montfermeil; they had traversed it together, Cosette and he; he thought of what the weather had been, of the leafless trees, of the wood destitute of birds, of the sunless sky; it mattered not, it was charming. He arranged the tiny garments on the bed, the fichu next to the petticoat, the stockings beside the shoes, and he looked at them, one after the other. She was no taller than that, she had her big doll in her arms, she had put her louis d'or in the pocket of that apron, she had laughed, they walked hand in hand, she had no one in the world but him.

Then his venerable, white head fell forward on the bed, that stoical old heart, broke, his face was engulfed, so to speak, in

Cosette's garments, and if any one had passed up the stairs at that moment, he would have heard frightful sobs.

IV. — THE IMMORTAL LIVER.¹

THE old and formidable struggle, of which we have already witnessed so many phases, began once more.

Jacob struggled with the angel but one night. Alas! how many times have we beheld Jean Valjean seized bodily by his conscience, in the darkness, and struggling desperately against it!

Unheard-of conflict! At certain moments the foot slips; at other moments the ground crumbles away underfoot. How many times had that conscience, mad for the good, clasped and overthrown him! How many times had the truth, set her knee inexorably upon his breast! How many times, hurled to earth by the light, had he begged for mercy! How many times had that implacable spark, lighted within him, and upon him by the Bishop, dazzled him by force when he had wished to be blind! How many times had he risen to his feet in the combat, held fast to the rock, leaning against sophism, dragged in the dust, now getting the upper hand of his conscience, again overthrown by it! How many times, after an equivoque, after the specious and treacherous reasoning of egoism, had he heard his irritated conscience cry in his ear: "A trip! you wretch!" How many times had his refractory thoughts rattled convulsively in his throat, under the evidence of duty! Resistance to God. Funereal sweats. What secret wounds which he alone felt bleed! What excoriations in his lamentable existence! How many times he had risen bleeding, bruised, broken, enlightened, despair in his heart, serenity in his soul! and, vanquished, he had felt himself the conqueror. And, after having dislocated, broken, and rent his conscience with red-hot pincers, it had said to him, as it stood over him, formidable, luminous, and tranquil: "Now, go in peace!"

But on emerging from so melancholy a conflict, what a lugubrious peace, alas!

Nevertheless, that night Jean Valjean felt that he was passing through his final combat.

A heartrending question presented itself.

Predestinations are not all direct; they do not open out in a straight avenue before the predestined man; they have

¹ In allusion to the story of Prometheus.

blind courts, impassable alleys, obscure turns, disturbing cross-roads offering the choice of many ways. Jean Valjean had halted at that moment at the most perilous of these cross-roads.

He had come to the supreme crossing of good and evil. He had that gloomy intersection beneath his eyes. On this accasion once more, as had happened to him already in other sad vicissitudes, two roads opened out before him, the one tempting, the other alarming.

Which was he to take?

He was counselled to the one which alarmed him by that mysterious index finger which we all perceive whenever we fix our eyes on the darkness.

Once more, Jean Valjean had the choice between the terrible port and the smiling ambush.

Is it then true? the soul may recover; but not fate. Frightful thing! an incurable destiny!

This is the problem which presented itself to him:

In what manner was Jean Valjean to behave in relation to the happiness of Cosette and Marius? It was he who had willed that happiness, it was he who had brought it about; he had, himself, buried it in his entrails, and at that moment, when he reflected on it, he was able to enjoy the sort of satisfaction which an armorer would experience on recognizing his factory mark on a knife, on withdrawing it, all smoking, from his own breast.

Cosette had Marius, Marius possessed Cosette. They had everything, even riches. And this was his doing.

But what was he, Jean Valjean, to do with this happiness, now that it existed, now that it was there? Should he force himself on this happiness? Should he treat it as belonging to him? No doubt, Cosette did belong to another; but should he, Jean Valjean, retain of Cosette all that he could retain? Should he remain the sort of father, half seen but respected, which he had hitherto been? Should he, without saying a word, bring his past to that future? Should he present himself there, as though he had a right, and should he seat himself, veiled, at that luminous fireside? Should he take those innocent hands into his tragic hands, with a smile? Should he place upon the peaceful fender of the Gillenormand drawing-room those feet of his, which dragged behind them the disgraceful shadow of the law. Should he enter into participation in the fair fortunes of Cosette and Marius? Should he render the obscurity on his brow and the cloud upon theirs still more

dense? Should he place his catastrophe as a third associate in their felicity? Should he continue to hold his peace? In a word, should he be the sinister mute of destiny beside these two happy beings?

We must have become habituated to patality and to encounters with it, in order to have the daring to raise our eyes when certain questions appear to us in all their horrible nakedness. Good or evil stands behind this severe interrogation point. What are you going to do? demands the sphinx.

This habit of trial Jean Valjean possessed. He gazed intently at the sphinx.

He examined the pitiless problem under all its aspects.

Cosette, that charming existence, was the raft of this shipwreck. What was he to do? To cling fast to it, or to let go his hold?

If he clung to it, he should emerge from disaster, he should ascend again into the sunlight, he should let the bitter water drip from his garments and his hair, he was saved, he should live.

And if he let go his hold?

Then, the abyss.

Thus he took sad council with his thoughts. Or, to speak more correctly, he fought; he kicked furiously internally, now against his will, now against his conviction.

Happily for Jean Valjean that he had been able to weep. That relieved him, possibly. But the beginning was savage. A tempest, more furious than the one which had formerly driven him to Arras, broke loose within him. The past surged up before him facing the present; he compared them and sobbed. The sluice of tears once opened, the despairing man writhed.

He felt that he had been stopped short.

Alas! in this fight to the death between our egotism and our duty, when we thus retreat step by step before our immutable ideal, bewildered, furious, exasperated at having to yield, disputing the ground, hoping for a possible flight, seeking an escape, what an abrupt and sinister resistance does the foot of the wall offer in our rear!

To feel the sacred shadow which forms an obstacle!

The invisible inexorable, what an obsession!

Then, one is never done with conscience. Make your choice, Brutus; make your choice, Cato. It is fathomless, since it is God. One flings into that well the labor of one's whole life, one flings in one's fortune, one flings in one's riches, one flings in one's success, one flings in one's liberty or father-

land, one flings in one's well-being, one flings in one's repose, one flings in one's joy! More! more! more! Empty the vase! tip the urn! One must finish by flinging in one's heart.

Somewhere in the fog of the ancient hells, there is a tun like that.

Is not one pardonable, if one at last refuses! Can the inexhaustible have any right? Are not chains which are endless above human strength? Who would blame Sisyphus and Jean Valjean for saying: "It is enough!"

The obedience of matter is limited by friction; is there no limit to the obedience of the soul? If perpetual motion is impossible, can perpetual self-sacrifice be exacted?

The first step is nothing, it is the last which is difficult. What was the Champmathieu affair it comparison with Cosette's marriage and of that which it entailed! What is a re-entrance into the galleys, compared to entrance into the void?

Oh, first step that must be descended, how sombre art thou! Oh, second step, how black art thou!

How could he refrain from turning aside his head this time?

Martyrdom is sublimation, corrosive sublimation. It is a torture which consecrates. One can consent to it for the first hour; one seats oneself on the throne of glowing iron, one places on one's head the crown of hot iron, one accepts the globe of red hot iron, one takes the sceptre of red hot iron, but the mantle of flame still remains to be donned, and comes there not a moment when the miserable flesh revolts and when one abdicates from suffering?

At length, Jean Valjean entered into the peace of exhaustion.

He weighed, he reflected, he considered the alternatives, the mysterious balance of light and darkness.

Should he impose his galleys on those two dazzling children, or should he consummate his irremediable engulfment by himself? On one side lay the sacrifice of Cosette, on the other that of himself.

At what solution should he arrive? What decision did he come to?

What resolution did he take? What was his own inward definitive response to the unbribable interrogatory of fatality? What door did he decide to open? Which side of his life did he resolve upon closing and condemning? Among all the

unfathomable precipices which surrounded him, which was his choice? What extremity did he accept? To which of the gulfs did he nod his head?

His dizzy reverie lasted all night long.

He remained there until daylight, in the same attitude, bent double over that bed, prostrate beneath the enormity of fate, crushed, perchance, alas! with clenched fists, with arms outspread at right angles, like a man crucified who has been unnailed, and flung face down on the earth. There he remained for twelve hours, the twelve long hours of a long winter's night, ice-cold, without once raising his head, and without uttering a word. He was as motionless as a corpse, while his thoughts wallowed on the earth and soared, now like the hydra, now like the eagle. Any one to behold him thus motionless, would have pronounced him dead; all at once he shuddered convulsively, and his mouth, glued to Cosette's garments, kissed them; then it could be seen that he was alive.

Who could see? Since Jean Valjean was alone, and there was no one there.

The One who is in the shadows.



BOOK SEVENTH.—THE LAST DRAUGHT FROM THE CUP.

I.—THE SEVENTH CIRCLE AND THE EIGHTH HEAVEN.

THE days that follow weddings are solitary. People respect the meditations of the happy pair. And also, their tardy slumbers, to some degree. The tumult of visits and congratulations only begins later on. On the morning of the 17th of February, it was a little past midday when Basque, with napkin and feather-duster under his arm, busy in setting his antechamber to rights, heard a light tap at the door. There had been no ring, which was discreet on such a day. Basque opened the door, and beheld M. Fauchelevent. He introduced him into the drawing-room, still encumbered and topsy-turvy, and which bore the air of a field of battle after the joys of the preceding evening.

"*Dame*, sir," remarked Basque, "we all woke up late."

"Is your master up?" asked Jean Valjean.

"How is Monsieur's arm?" replied Basque.

"Better. Is your master up?"

"Which one? the old one or the new one?"

"Monsieur Pontmercy."

"Monsieur le Baron," said Basque, drawing himself up.

A man is a Baron most of all to his servants. He counts for something with them; they are what a philosopher would call, bespattered with the title, and that flatters them. Marius, be it said in passing, a militant republican as he had proved, was now a Baron in spite of himself. A small revolution had taken place in the family in connection with this title. It was now M. Gillenormand who clung to it, and Marius who detached himself from it. But Colonel Pontmercy had written; "My son will bear my title." Marius obeyed. And then, Cosette, in whom the woman was beginning to dawn, was delighted to be a Baroness.

"Monsieur le Baron?" repeated Basque. "I will go and see. I will tell him that M. Fauchelevent is here."

"No. Do not tell him that it is I. Tell him that some one wishes to speak to him in private, and mention no name."

"Ah!" ejaculated Basque.

"I wish to surprise him."

"Ah!" ejaculated Basque once more, emitting his second "ah!" as an explanation of the first.

And he left the room.

Jean Valjean remained alone.

The drawing-room, as we have just said, was in great disorder. It seemed as though, by lending an ear, one might still hear the vague noise of the wedding. On the polished floor lay all sorts of flowers which had fallen from garlands and head-dresses. The wax candles, burned to stumps, added stalactites of wax to the crystal drops of the chandeliers. Not a single piece of furniture was in its place. In the corners, three or four arm-chairs drawn close together in a circle, had the appearance of continuing a conversation. The whole effect was cheerful. A certain grace still lingers round a dead feast. It has been a happy thing. On the chairs in disarray, among those fading flowers, beneath those extinct lights, people have thought of joy. The sun had succeeded to the chandelier, and made its way gayly into the drawing-room.

Several minutes elapsed. Jean Valjean stood motionless on the spot where Basque had left him. He was very pale. His eyes were hollow, and so sunken in his head by sleeplessness that they nearly disappeared in their orbits. His black coat bore the weary folds of a garment that has been up all night.



LA DERNIERE
GOUTTE DU CALICE

THE LAST DROP IN THE CUP.

The elbows were whitened with the down which the friction of cloth against linen leaves behind it.

Jean Valjean stared at the window outlined on the polished floor at his feet by the sun.

There came a sound at the door, and he raised his eyes.

Marius entered, his head well up, his mouth smiling, an indescribable light on his countenance, his brow expanded, his eyes triumphant. He had not slept either.

"It is you, father!" he exclaimed, on catching sight of Jean Valjean; "that idiot of a Basque had such a mysterious air! But you have come too early. It is only half past twelve. Cosette is asleep."

That word: "Father," said to M. Fauchelevent by Marius, signified: supreme felicity. There had always existed, as the reader knows, a lofty wall, a coldness and a constraint between them; ice which must be broken or melted. Marius had reached that point of intoxication when the wall was lowered, when the ice dissolved, and when M. Fauchelevent was to him, as to Cosette, a father.

He continued: his words poured forth, as is the peculiarity of divine paroxysms of joy.

"How glad I am to see you! If you only knew how we missed you yesterday! Good morning, father. How is your hand? Better, is it not?"

And, satisfied with the favorable reply which he had made to himself, he pursued:

"We have both been talking about you. Cosette loves you so dearly! You must not forget that you have a chamber here. We want nothing more to do with the Rue de l'Homme Armé. We will have no more of it at all. How could you go to live in a street like that, which is sickly, which is disagreeable, which is ugly, which has a barrier at one end, where one is cold, and into which one cannot enter? You are to come and install yourself here. And this very day. Or you will have to deal with Cosette. She means to lead us all by the nose, I warn you. You have your own chamber here, it is close to ours, it opens on the garden; the trouble with the clock has been attended to, the bed is made, it is all ready, you have only to take possession of it. Near your bed Cosette has placed a huge, old, easy-chair covered with Utrecht velvet, and she has said to it: 'Stretch out your arms to him.' A nightingale comes to the clump of acacias opposite your windows, every spring. In two months more you will have it. You will have its nest on your left and ours on your right. By

night it will sing, and by day Cosette will prattle. Your chamber faces due South. Cosette will arrange your books for you, your Voyages of Captain Cook and the other, — Vancouver's — and all your affairs. I believe that there is a little valise to which you are attached, I have fixed upon a corner of honor for that. You have conquered my grandfather, you suit him. We will live together. Do you play whist? you will overwhelm my grandfather with delight if you play whist. It is you who shall take Cosette to walk on the days when I am at the courts, you shall give her your arm, you know, as you used to, in the Luxembourg. We are absolutely resolved to be happy. And you shall be included in it, in our happiness, do you hear, father? Come, will you breakfast with us today?"

"Sir," said Jean Valjean, "I have something to say to you. I am an ex-convict."

The limit of shrill sounds perceptible can be overleaped, as well in the case of the mind as in that of the ear. These words: "I am an ex-convict," proceeding from the mouth of M. Fauchelevent and entering the ear of Marius, overshot the possible. It seemed to him that something had just been said to him; but he did not know what. He stood with his mouth wide open.

Then he perceived that the man who was addressing him was frightful. Wholly absorbed in his own dazzled state, he had not, up to that moment, observed the other man's terrible pallor.

Jean Valjean untied the black cravat which supported his right arm, unrolled the linen from around his hand, bared his thumb and showed it to Marius.

"There is nothing the matter with my hand," said he.

Marius looked at the thumb.

"There has not been anything the matter with it," went on Jean Valjean.

There was, in fact, no trace of any injury.

Jean Valjean continued:

"It was fitting that I should be absent from your marriage. I absented myself as much as was in my power. So I invented this injury in order that I might not commit a forgery, that I might not introduce a flaw into the marriage documents, in order that I might escape from signing."

Marius stammered.

"What is the meaning of this?"

"The meaning of it is," replied Jean Valjean, "that I have been in the galleys."

"You are driving me mad!" exclaimed Marius in terror.

"Monsieur Pontmercy," said Jean Valjean, "I was nineteen years in the galleys. For theft. Then, I was condemned for life for theft, for a second offence. At the present moment, I have broken my ban."

In vain did Marius recoil before the reality, refuse the fact, resist the evidence, he was forced to give way. He began to understand, and, as always happens in such cases, he understood too much. An inward shudder of hideous enlightenment flashed through him; an idea which made him quiver traversed his mind. He caught a glimpse of a wretched destiny for himself in the future.

"Say all, say all!" he cried. "You are Cosette's father!"

And he retreated a couple of paces with a movement of indescribable horror.

Jean Valjean elevated his head with so much majesty of attitude, that he seemed to grow even to the ceiling.

"It is necessary that you should believe me here, sir; although our oath to others may not be received in law . . ."

Here he paused, then, with a sort of sovereign and sepulchral authority, he added, articulating slowly, and emphasizing the syllables:

". . . You will believe me. I the father of Cosette! before God, no. Monsieur le Baron Pontmercy, I am a peasant of Faverolles. I earned my living by pruning trees. My name is not Fauchelevent, but Jean Valjean. I am not related to Cosette. Reassure yourself."

Marius stammered:

"Who will prove that to me?"

"I. Since I tell you so."

Marius looked at the man. He was melancholy yet tranquil. No lie could proceed from such a calm. That which is icy is sincere. The truth could be felt in that chill of the tomb.

"I believe you," said Marius.

Jean Valjean bent his head, as though taking note of this, and continued:

"What am I to Cosette? A passer-by. Ten years ago, I did not know that she was in existence. I love her, it is true. One loves a child whom one has seen when very young, being old oneself. When one is old, one feels oneself a grandfather towards all little children. You may, it seems to me, suppose that I have something which resembles a heart. She was an orphan. Without either father or mother. She needed me.

That is why I began to love her. Children are so weak that the first comer, even a man like me, can become their protector. I have fulfilled this duty towards Cosette. I do not think that so slight a thing can be called a good action; but if it be a good action, well, say that I have done it. Register this attenuating circumstance. To-day, Cosette passes out of my life; our two roads part. Henceforth, I can do nothing for her. She is Madame Pontmercy. Her providence has changed. And Cosette gains by the change. All is well. As for the six hundred thousand francs, you do not mention them to me, but I forestall your thought, they are a deposit. How did that deposit come into my hands? What does that matter? I restore the deposit. Nothing more can be demanded of me. I complete the restitution by announcing my true name. That concerns me. I have a reason for desiring that you should know who I am."

And Jean Valjean looked Marius full in the face.

All that Marius experienced was tumultuous and incoherent. Certain gusts of destiny produce these billows in our souls.

We have all undergone moments of trouble in which everything within us is dispersed; we say the first things that occur to us, which are not always precisely those which should be said. There are sudden revelations which one cannot bear, and which intoxicate like baleful wine. Marius was stupefied by the novel situation which presented itself to him, to the point of addressing that man almost like a person who was angry with him for this avowal.

"But why," he exclaimed, "do you tell me all this? Who forces you to do so? You could have kept your secret to yourself. You are neither denounced, nor tracked nor pursued. You have a reason for wantonly making such a revelation. Conclude. There is something more. In what connection do you make this confession? What is your motive?"

"My motive?" replied Jean Valjean in a voice so low and dull that one would have said that he was talking to himself rather than to Marius. "From what motive, in fact, has this convict just said 'I am a convict'? Well, yes! the motive is strange. It is out of honesty. Stay, the unfortunate point is that I have a thread in my heart, which keeps me fast. It is when one is old that that sort of thread is particularly solid. All life falls in ruin around one; one resists. Had I been able to tear out that thread, to break it, to undo the knot or to cut it, to go far away, I should have been safe. I had only to go

away ; there are diligences in the Rue Bouloy ; you are happy I am going. I have tried to break that thread, I have jerked at it, it would not break, I tore my heart with it. Then I said : ' I cannot live anywhere else than here.' I must stay. Well, yes, you are right, I am a fool, why not simply remain here ? You offer me a chamber in this house, Madame Pontmercy is sincerely attached to me, she said to the arm-chair : ' Stretch out your arms to him,' your grandfather demands nothing better than to have me, I suit him, we shall live together, and take our meals in common, I shall give Cosette my arm. . . . Madame Pontmercy, excuse me, it is a habit, — we shall have but one roof, one table, one fire, the same chimney-corner in winter, the same promenade in summer, that is joy, that is happiness, that is everything. We shall live as one family. One family !"

At that word, Jean Valjean became wild. He folded his arms, glared at the door beneath his feet as though he would have excavated an abyss therein, and his voice suddenly rose in thundering tones :

" As one family ! No. I belong to no family. I do not belong to yours. I do not belong to any family of men. In houses where people are among themselves, I am superfluous. There are families, but there is nothing of the sort for me. I am an unlucky wretch ; I am left outside. Did I have a father and mother ? I almost doubt it. On the day when I gave that child in marriage, all came to an end. I have seen her happy, and that she is with a man whom she loves, and that there exists here a kind old man, a household of two angels, and all joys in that house, and that it was well, I said to myself : ' Enter thou not.' I could have lied, it is true, have deceived you all, and remained Monsieur Fauchelevent. So long as it was for her, I could lie ; but now it would be for myself, and I must not. It was sufficient for me to hold my peace, it is true, and all would go on. You ask me what has forced me to speak ? a very odd thing ; my conscience. To hold my peace was very easy, however. I passed the night in trying to persuade myself to it ; you question me, and what I have just said to you is so extraordinary that you have the right to do it ; well, yes, I have passed the night in alleging reasons to myself, and I gave myself very good reasons, I have done what I could. But there are two things in which I have not succeeded ; in breaking the thread that holds me fixed, riveted and sealed here by the heart, or in silencing some one who speaks softly to me when I am alone. That is

why I have come hither to tell you everything this morning. Everything or nearly everything. It is useless to tell you that which concerns only myself; I keep that to myself. You know the essential points. So I have taken my mystery and have brought it to you. And I have disembowelled my secret before your eyes. It was not a resolution that was easy to take. I struggled all night long. Ah! you think that I did not tell myself that this was no Champmathieu affair, that by concealing my name I was doing no one any injury, that the name of Fauchelevant had been given to me by Fauchelevant himself, out of gratitude for a service rendered to him, and that I might assuredly keep it, and that I should be happy in that chamber which you offer me, that I should not be in anyone's way, that I should be in my own little corner, and that, while you would have Cosette, I should have the idea that I was in the same house with her. Each one of us would have had his share of happiness. If I continued to be Monsieur Fauchelevant, that would arrange everything. Yes, with the exception of my soul. There was joy everywhere upon my surface, but the bottom of my soul remained black. It is not enough to be happy, one must be content. Thus I should have remained Monsieur Fauchelevant, thus I should have concealed my true visage, thus, in the presence of your expansion, I should have had an enigma, thus, in the midst of your full noonday, I should have had shadows, thus, without crying 'ware,' I should have simply introduced the galleys to your fireside, I should have taken my seat at your table with the thought that if you knew who I was, you would drive me from it, I should have allowed myself to be served by domestics who, had they known, would have said: 'How horrible!' I should have touched you with my elbow, which you have a right to dislike, I should have filched your clasps of the hand! There would have existed in your house a division of respect between venerable white locks and tainted white locks; at your most intimate hours, when all hearts thought themselves open to the very bottom to all the rest, when we four were together, your grandfather, you two and myself, a stranger would have been present! I should have been side by side with you in your existence, having for my only care not to disarrange the cover of my dreadful pit. Thus, I, a dead man, should have thrust myself upon you who are living beings. I should have condemned her to myself forever. You and Cosette and I would have had all three of our heads in the green cap! Does it not make you shudder? I am

only the most crushed of men; I should have been the most monstrous of men. And I should have committed that crime every day! And I should have had that face of night upon my visage every day! every day! And I should have communicated to you a share in my taint every day! every day! to you, my dearly beloved, my children, to you, my innocent creatures! Is it nothing to hold one's peace? is it a simple matter to keep silence? No, it is not simple. There is a silence which lies. And my lie, and my fraud and my indignity, and my cowardice and my treason and my crime, I should have drained drop by drop, I should have spit it out, then swallowed it again, I should have finished at midnight and have begun again at midday, and my 'good morning' would have lied, and my 'good night' would have lied, and I should have slept on it, I should have eaten it, with my bread, and I should have looked Cosette in the face, and I should have responded to the smile of the angel by the smile of the damned soul, and I should have been an abominable villain! Why should I do it? in order to be happy. In order to be happy. Have I the right to be happy? I stand outside of life, sir."

Jean Valjean paused. Marius listened. Such chains of ideas and of anguishes cannot be interrupted. Jean Valjean lowered his voice once more, but it was no longer a dull voice — it was a sinister voice.

"You ask why I speak? I am neither denounced, nor pursued, nor tracked, you say. Yes! I am denounced! yes! I am tracked! By whom? By myself. It is I who bar the passage to myself, and I drag myself, and I push myself, and I arrest myself, and I execute myself, and when one holds oneself, one is firmly held."

And, seizing a handful of his own coat by the nape of the neck and extending it towards Marius:

"Do you see that fist?" he continued. "Don't you think that it holds that collar in such a wise as not to release it? Well! conscience is another grasp! If one desires to be happy, sir, one must never understand duty; for, as soon as one has comprehended it, it is implacable. One would say that it punished you for comprehending it; but no, it rewards you; for it places you in a hell, where you feel God beside you. One has no sooner lacerated his own entrails than he is at peace with himself."

And, with a poignant accent, he added:

"Monsieur Pontmercy, this is not common sense, I am an

honest man. It is by degrading myself in your eyes that I elevate myself in my own. This has happened to me once before, but it was less painful then; it was a mere nothing. Yes, an honest man. I should not be so if, through my fault, you had continued to esteem me; now that you despise me, I am so. I have that fatality hanging over me that, not being able to ever have anything but stolen consideration, that consideration humiliates me, and crushes me inwardly, and, in order that I may respect myself, it is necessary that I should be despised. Then I straighten up again. I am a galley-slave who obeys his conscience. I know well that that is most improbable. But what would you have me do about it? it is the fact. I have entered into engagements with myself; I keep them. There are encounters which bind us, there are chances which involve us in duties. You see, Monsieur Pontmercy, various things have happened to me in the course of my life."

Again Jean Valjean paused, swallowing his saliva with an effort, as though his words had a bitter after-taste, and then he went on:

"When one has such a horror hanging over one, one has not the right to make others share it without their knowledge, one has not the right to make them slip over one's own precipice without their perceiving it, one has not the right to let one's red blouse drag upon them, one has no right to slyly encumber with one's misery the happiness of others. It is hideous to approach those who are healthy, and to touch them in the dark with one's ulcer. In spite of the fact that Fauchelevent lent me his name, I have no right to use it; he could give it to me, but I could not take it. A name is an *I*. You see, sir, that I have thought somewhat, I have read a little, although I am a peasant; and you see that I express myself properly. I understand things. I have procured myself an education. Well, yes, to abstract a name and to place oneself under it, is dishonest. Letters of the alphabet can be filched, like a purse or a watch. To be a false signature in flesh and blood, to be a living false key, to enter the house of honest people by picking their lock, never more to look straightforward, to forever eye askance, to be infamous within the *I*, no! no! no! no! no! It is better to suffer, to bleed, to weep, to tear one's skin from the flesh with one's nails, to pass nights writhing in anguish, to devour oneself body and soul. That is why I have just told you all this. Wantonly, as you say."

He drew a painful breath, and hurled this final word:

"In days gone by, I stole a loaf of bread in order to live; to-day, in order to live, I will not steal a name."

"To live!" interrupted Marius. "You do not need that name in order to live?"

"Ah! I understand the matter," said Jean Valjean, raising and lowering his head several times in succession.

A silence ensued. Both held their peace, each plunged in a gulf of thoughts. Marius was sitting near a table and resting the corner of his mouth on one of his fingers, which was folded back. Jean Valjean was pacing to and fro. He paused before a mirror, and remained motionless. Then, as though replying to some inward course of reasoning, he said, as he gazed at the mirror, which he did not see:

"While, at present, I am relieved."

He took up his march again, and walked to the other end of the drawing-room. At the moment when he turned round, he perceived that Marius was watching his walk. Then he said, with an inexpressible intonation:

"I drag my leg a little. Now you understand why."

Then he turned fully round towards Marius:

"And now, sir, imagine this: I have said nothing, I have remained Monsieur Fauchelevant, I have taken my place in your house, I am one of you, I am in my chamber, I come to breakfast in the morning in slippers, in the evening all three of us go to the play, I accompany Madame Pontmercy to the Tuileries, and to the Place Royale, we are together, you think me your equal; one fine day you are there, and I am there, we are conversing, we are laughing; all at once, you hear a voice shouting this name: 'Jean Valjean!' and behold, that terrible hand, the police, darts from the darkness, and abruptly tears off my mask!"

Again he paused; Marius had sprung to his feet with a shudder. Jean Valjean resumed:

"What do you say to that?"

Marius' silence answered for him.

Jean Valjean continued:

"You see that I am right in not holding my peace. Be happy, be in heaven, be the angel of an angel, exist in the sun, be content therewith, and do not trouble yourself about the means which a poor damned wretch takes to open his breast and force his duty to come forth; you have before you, sir, a wretched man."

Marius slowly crossed the room, and, when he was quite close to Jean Valjean, he offered the latter his hand.

But Marius was obliged to step up and take that hand which was not offered, Jean Valjean let him have his own way, and it seemed to Marius that he pressed a hand of marble.

"My grandfather has friends," said Marius; "I will procure your pardon."

"It is useless," replied Jean Valjean. "I am believed to be dead, and that suffices. The dead are not subjected to surveillance. They are supposed to rot in peace. Death is the same thing as pardon."

And, disengaging the hand which Marius held, he added, with a sort of inexorable dignity:

"Moreover, the friend to whom I have recourse, is the doing of my duty; and I need but one pardon, that of my conscience."

At that moment, a door at the other end of the drawing-room opened gently half way, and in the opening Cosette's head appeared. They saw only her sweet face, her hair was in charming disorder, her eyelids were still swollen with sleep. She made the movement of a bird, which thrusts its head out of its nest, glanced first at her husband, then at Jean Valjean, and cried to them with a smile, so that they seemed to behold a smile at the heart of a rose:

"I will wager that you are talking politics. How stupid that is, instead of being with me!"

Jean Valjean shuddered.

"Cosette! . . ." stammered Marius.

And he paused. One would have said that they were two criminals.

Cosette, who was radiant, continued to gaze at both of them. There was something in her eyes like gleams of paradise.

"I have caught you in the very act," said Cosette. "Just now, I heard my father Fauchelevent through the door saying: 'Conscience . . . doing my duty . . .' That is politics, indeed it is. I will not have it. People should not talk politics the very next day. It is not right."

"You are mistaken, Cosette," said Marius, "we are talking business. We are discussing the best investment of your six hundred thousand francs . . ."

"That is not it at all," interrupted Cosette. "I am coming. Does anybody want me here?"

And, passing resolutely through the door, she entered the drawing-room. She was dressed in a voluminous white dressing-gown, with a thousand folds and large sleeves which, starting from the neck, fell to her feet. In the golden heavens of

some ancient gothic pictures, there are these charming sacks fit to clothe the angels.

She contemplated herself from head to foot in a long mirror, then exclaimed, in an outburst of ineffable ecstacy :

"There was once a King and a Queen. Oh ! how happy I am !"

That said, she made a curtsy to Marius and to Jean Valjean.

"There," said she, "I am going to install myself near you in an easy-chair, we breakfast in half an hour, you shall say anything you like, I know well that men must talk, and I will be very good."

Marius took her by the arm and said lovingly to her :

"We are talking business."

"By the way," said Cosette, "I have opened my window, a flock of pierrots has arrived in the garden, — Birds, not maskers. To-day is Ash-Wednesday ; but not for the birds."

"I tell you that we are talking business, go, my little Cosette, leave us alone for a moment. We are talking figures. That will bore you."

"You have a charming cravat on this morning, Marius. You are very dandified, monseigneur. No, it will not bore me."

"I assure you that it will bore you."

"No. Since it is you. I shall not understand you, but I shall listen to you. When one hears the voices of those whom one loves, one does not need to understand the words that they utter. That we should be here together — that is all that I desire. I shall remain with you, bah !"

"You are my beloved Cosette ! Impossible."

"Impossible !"

"Yes."

"Very good," said Cosette. "I was going to tell you some news. I could have told you that your grandfather is still asleep, that your aunt is at mass, that the chimney in my father Fauchelevent's room smokes, that Nicolette has sent for the chimney-sweep, that Toussaint and Nicolette have already quarrelled, that Nicolette makes sport of Toussaint's stammer. Well, you shall know nothing. Ah ! it is impossible ? you shall see, gentlemen, that I, in my turn, can say : It is impossible. Then who will be caught ? I beseech you, my little Marius, let me stay here with you two."

"I swear to you, that it is indispensable that we should be alone."

"Well, am I any body?"

Jean Valjean had not uttered a single word. Cosette turned to him:

"In the first place, father, I want you to come and embrace me. What do you mean by not saying anything instead of taking my part? who gave me such a father as that? You must perceive that my family life is very unhappy. My husband beats me. Come, embrace me instantly."

Jean Valjean approached.

Cosette turned toward Marius.

"As for you, I shall make a face at you."

Then she presented her brow to Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean advanced a step toward her.

Cosette recoiled.

"Father, you are pale. Does your arm hurt you?"

"It is well," said Jean Valjean.

"Did you sleep badly?"

"No."

"Are you sad?"

"No."

"Embrace me if you are well, if you sleep well, if you are content, I will not scold you."

And again she offered him her brow.

Jean Valjean dropped a kiss upon that brow whereon rested a celestial gleam.

"Smile."

Jean Valjean obeyed. It was the smile of a spectre.

"Now, defend me against my husband."

"Cosette! . . ." ejaculated Marius.

"Get angry, father. Say that I must stay. You can certainly talk before me. So you think me very silly. What you say is astonishing! business, placing money in a bank, a great matter truly. Men make mysteries out of nothing. I am very pretty this morning. Look at me, Marius."

And with an adorable shrug of the shoulders, and an indescribably exquisite pout, she glanced at Marius.

"I love you!" said Marius.

"I adore you!" said Cosette.

And they fell irresistibly into each other's arms.

"Now," said Cosette, adjusting a fold of her dressing-gown, with a triumphant little grimace, "I shall stay."

"No, not that," said Marius, in a supplicating tone. "We have to finish something."

"Still no?"

Marius assumed a grave tone :

"I assure you, Cosette, that it is impossible."

"Ah! you put on your man's voice, sir. That is well, I go. You, father, have not upheld me. Monsieur my father, monsieur my husband, you are tyrants. I shall go and tell grand-papa. If you think that I am going to return and talk platitudes to you, you are mistaken. I am proud. I shall wait for you now. You shall see, that it is you who are going to be bored without me. I am going, it is well."

And she left the room.

Two seconds later, the door opened once more, her fresh, and rosy head was again thrust between the two leaves, and she cried to them :

"I am very angry indeed."

The door closed again, and the shadows descended once more.

It was as though a ray of sunlight should have suddenly traversed the night, without itself being conscious of it.

Marius made sure that the door was securely closed.

"Poor Cosette!" he murmured, "when she finds out . . ."

At that word Jean Valjean trembled in every limb. He fixed on Marius a bewildered eye.

"Cosette! oh yes, it is true, you are going to tell Cosette about this. That is right. Stay, I had not thought of that. One has the strength for one thing, but not for another. Sir, I conjure you, I entreat now, sir, give me your most sacred word of honor, that you will not tell her. Is it not enough that you should know it? I have been able to say it myself without being forced to it, I could have told it to the universe, to the whole world, — it was all one to me. But she, she does not know what it is, it would terrify her. What, a convict! we should be obliged to explain matters to her, to say to her: 'He is a man who has been in the galleys.' She saw the chain gang pass by one day. Oh! My God!"

. . . He dropped into an arm-chair and hid his face in his hands.

His grief was not audible, but from the quivering of his shoulders it was evident that he was weeping. Silent tears, terrible tears.

There is something of suffocation in the sob. He was seized with a sort of convulsion, he threw himself against the back of the chair as though to gain breath, letting his arms fall, and allowing Marius to see his face inundated with tears, and Marius heard him murmur, so low that his voice seemed to issue from fathomless depths :

"Oh! would that I could die!"

"Be at your ease," said Marius, "I will keep your secret for myself alone."

And, less touched perhaps, than he ought to have been, but forced, for the last hour, to familiarize himself with something as unexpected as it was dreadful, gradually beholding the convict superposed before his very eyes, upon M. Fauchelevent, overcome, little by little, by that lugubrious reality, and led, by the natural inclination of the situation, to recognize the space which had just been placed between that man and himself, Marius added:

"It is impossible that I should not speak a word to you, with regard to the deposit which you have so faithfully and honestly remitted. That is an act of probity. It is just that some recompense should be bestowed on you. Fix the sum yourself, it shall be counted out to you. Do not fear to set it very high."

"I thank you, sir," replied Jean Valjean, gently.

He remained in thought for a moment, mechanically passing the tip of his fore-finger across his thumb-nail, then he lifted up his voice:

"All is nearly over. But one last thing remains for me . . ."

"What is it?"

Jean Valjean struggled with what seemed a last hesitation, and, without voice, without breath, he stammered rather than said:

"Now that you know, do you think, sir, you, who are the master, that I ought not to see Cosette any more?"

"I think that would be better," replied Marius coldly.

"I shall never see her more," murmured Jean Valjean.

And he directed his steps towards the door.

He laid his hand on the knob, the latch yielded, the door opened. Jean Valjean pushed it open far enough to pass through, stood motionless for a second, then closed the door again and turned to Marius.

He was no longer pale, he was livid. There were no longer any tears in his eyes, but only a sort of tragic flame. His voice had regained a strange composure.

"Stay, sir," he said. "If you will allow it, I will come to see her. I assure you that I desire it greatly. If I had not cared to see Cosette, I should not have made to you the confession that I have made, I should have gone away; but, as I desired to remain in the place where Cosette is, and to con-

tinue to see her, I had to tell you about it honestly. You follow my reasoning, do you not? it is a matter easily understood. You see, I have had her with me for more than nine years. We lived first in that hut on the boulevard, then in the convent, then near the Luxembourg. That was where you saw her for the first time. You remember her blue plush hat. Then we went to the Quartier des Invalides, where there was a railing on a garden, the Rue Plumet. I lived in a little back court-yard, whence I could hear her piano. That was my life. We never left each other. That lasted for nine years and some months. I was like her own father, and she was my child. I do not know whether you understand, Monsieur Pontmercy, but to go away now, never to see her again, never to speak to her again, to no longer have anything, would be hard. If you do not disapprove of it, I will come to see Cosette from time to time. I will not come often. I will not remain long. You shall give orders that I am to be received in the little waiting-room. On the ground floor. I could enter perfectly well by the back door, but that might create surprise perhaps, and it would be better, I think, for me to enter by the usual door. Truly, sir, I should like to see a little more of Cosette. As rarely as you please. Put yourself in my place, I have nothing left but that. And then, we must be cautious. If I no longer come at all, it would produce a bad effect, it would be considered singular. What I can do, by the way, is to come in the afternoon, when night is beginning to fall."

"You shall come every evening," said Marius, "and Cosette will be waiting for you."

"You are kind, sir," said Jean Valjean.

Marius saluted Jean Valjean, happiness escorted despair to the door, and these two men parted.

II. — THE OBSCURITIES WHICH A REVELATION CAN CONTAIN.

MARIUS was quite upset.

The sort of estrangement which he had always felt towards the man beside whom he had seen Cosette, was now explained to him. There was something enigmatic about that person, of which his instinct had warned him.

This enigma was the most hideous of disgraces, the galleys. This M. Fauchelevent was the convict Jean Valjean.

To abruptly find such a secret in the midst of one's happi-

ness resembles the discovery of a scorpion in a nest of turtle-doves.

Was the happiness of Marius and Cosette thenceforth condemned to such a neighborhood? Was this an accomplished fact? Did the acceptance of that man form a part of the marriage now consummated? Was there nothing to be done?

Had Marius wedded the convict as well?

In vain may one be crowned with light and joy, in vain may one taste the grand purple hour of life, happy love, such shocks would force even the archangel in his ecstasy, even the demigod in his glory, to shudder.

As is always the case in changes of view of this nature, Marius asked himself whether he had nothing with which to reproach himself. Had he been wanting in divination? Had he been wanting in prudence? Had he involuntarily dulled his wits? A little, perhaps. Had he entered upon this love affair, which had ended in his marriage to Cosette, without taking sufficient precautions to throw light upon the surroundings? He admitted,—it is thus, by a series of successive admissions of ourselves in regard to ourselves, that life amends us, little by little,—he admitted the chimerical and visionary side of his nature, a sort of internal cloud peculiar to many organizations, and which, in paroxysms of passion and sorrow, dilates as the temperature of the soul changes, and invades the entire man, to such a degree as to render him nothing more than a conscience bathed in a mist. We have more than once indicated this characteristic element of Marius' individuality.

He recalled that, in the intoxication of his love, in the Rue Plumet, during those six or seven ecstatic weeks, he had not even spoken to Cosette of that drama in the Gorbeau hovel, where the victim had taken up such a singular line of silence during the struggle and the ensuing flight. How had it happened that he had not mentioned this to Cosette? Yet it was so near and so terrible! How had it come to pass that he had not even named the Thénardiens, and, particularly, on the day when he had encountered Éponine? He now found it almost difficult to explain his silence of that time. Nevertheless, he could account for it. He recalled his benumbed state, his intoxication with Cosette, love absorbing everything, that catching away of each other into the ideal, and perhaps also, like the imperceptible quantity of reason mingled with this violent and charming state of the soul, a vague, dull in-

stinct impelling him to conceal and abolish in his memory that redoubtable adventure, contact with which he dreaded, in which he did not wish to play any part, his agency in which he had kept secret, and in which he could be neither narrator nor witness without being an accuser.

Moreover, these few weeks had been a flash of lightning; there had been no time for anything except love.

In short, having weighed everything, turned everything over in his mind, examined everything, whatever might have been the consequences if he had told Cosette about the Gorbeau ambush, even if he had discovered that Jean Valjean was a convict, would that have changed him, Marius? Would that have changed her, Cosette? Would he have drawn back? Would he have adored her any the less? Would he have refrained from marrying her? No. Then there was nothing to regret, nothing with which he need reproach himself. All was well. There is a deity for those drunken men who are called lovers. Marius blind, had followed the path which he would have chosen had he been in full possession of his sight. Love had bandaged his eyes, in order to lead him whither? To paradise.

But this paradise was henceforth complicated with an infernal accompaniment.

Marius' ancient estrangement towards this man, towards this Fauchelevent who had turned into Jean Valjean, was at present mingled with horror.

In this horror, let us state, there was some pity, and even a certain surprise.

This thief, this thief guilty of a second offence, had restored that deposit. And what a deposit! Six hundred thousand francs.

He alone was in the secret of that deposit. He might have kept it all, he had restored it all.

Moreover, he had himself revealed his situation. Nothing forced him to this. If anyone learned who he was, it was through himself. In this avowal there was something more than acceptance of humiliation, there was acceptance of peril. For a condemned man, a mask is not a mask, it is a shelter. A false name is security, and he had rejected that false name. He, the galley-slave, might have hidden himself forever in an honest family; he had withstood this temptation. And with what motive? Through a conscientious scruple. He himself explained this with the irresistible accents of truth. In short, whatever this Jean Valjean might be, he was, undoubtedly, a

conscience which was awakening. There existed some mysterious re-habilitation which had begun; and, to all appearances, scruples had for a long time already controlled this man. Such fits of justice and goodness are not characteristic of vulgar natures. An awakening of conscience is grandeur of soul.

Jean Valjean was sincere. This sincerity, visible, palpable, irrefragable, evident from the very grief that it caused him, rendered inquiries useless, and conferred authority on all that that man had said.

Here, for Marius, there was a strange reversal of situations. What breathed from M. Fauchelevent? distrust. What did Jean Valjean inspire? confidence.

In the mysterious balance of this Jean Valjean which the pensive Marius struck, he admitted the active principle, he admitted the passive principle, and he tried to reach a balance.

But all this went on as in a storm. Marius, while endeavoring to form a clear idea of this man, and while pursuing Jean Valjean, so to speak, in the depths of his thought, lost him and found him again in a fatal mist.

The deposit honestly restored, the probity of the confession—these were good. This produced a lightening of the cloud, then the cloud became black once more.

Troubled as were Marius' memories, a shadow of them returned to him.

After all, what was that adventure in the Jondrette attic? Why had that man taken to flight on the arrival of the police, instead of entering a complaint?

Here Marius found the answer. Because that man was a fugitive from justice, who had broken his ban.

Another question: Why had that man come to the barricade?

For Marius now once more distinctly beheld that recollection which had re-appeared in his emotions like sympathetic ink at the application of heat. This man had been in the barricade. He had not fought there. What had he come there for? In the presence of this question a spectre sprang up and replied: "Javert."

Marius recalled perfectly now that funereal sight of Jean Valjean dragging the pinioned Javert out of the barricade, and he still heard behind the corner of the little Rue Mondétour that frightful pistol shot. Obviously, there was hatred between that police spy and the galley-slave. The one was in the other's way. Jean Valjean had gone to the barricade for the purpose of revenging himself. He had arrived late. He

probably knew that Javert was a prisoner there. The Corsican vendetta has penetrated to certain lower strata and has become the law there; it is so simple that it does not astonish souls which are but half turned towards good; and those hearts are so constituted that a criminal, who is in the path of repentance, may be scrupulous in the matter of theft and unscrupulous in the matter of vengeance. Jean Valjean had killed Javert. At least, that seemed to be evident.

This was the final question, to be sure; but to this there was no reply. This question Marius felt like pincers. How had it come to pass that Jean Valjean's existence had elbowed that of Cosette for so long a period?

What melancholy sport of Providence was that which had placed that child in contact with that man? Are there then chains for two which are forged on high? and does God take pleasure in coupling the angel with the demon? So a crime and an innocence can be room-mates in the mysterious galleys of wretchedness? In that defiling of condemned persons which is called human destiny, can two brows pass side by side, the one ingenuous, the other formidable, the one all bathed in the divine whiteness of dawn, the other forever blemished by the flash of an eternal lightning? Who could have arranged that inexplicable pairing off? In what manner, in consequence of what prodigy, had any community of life been established between this celestial little creature and that old criminal?

Who could have bound the lamb to the wolf, and, what was still more incomprehensible, have attached the wolf to the lamb? For the wolf loved the lamb, for the fierce creature adored the feeble one, for, during the space of nine years, the angel had had the monster as her point of support. Cosette's childhood and girlhood, her advent in the daylight, her virginal growth towards life and light, had been sheltered by that hideous devotion. Here questions exfoliated, so to speak, into innumerable enigmas, abysses yawned at the bottoms of abysses, and Marius could no longer bend over Jean Valjean without becoming dizzy. What was this man-precipice?

The old symbols of Genesis are eternal; in human society, such as it now exists, and until a broader day shall effect a change in it, there will always be two men, the one superior, the other subterranean; the one which is according to good is Abel; the one which is according to evil is Cain. What was this tender Cain? What was this ruffian religiously absorbed in the adoration of a virgin, watching over her, rear-

ing her, guarding her, dignifying her, and enveloping her impure as he was himself, with purity?

What was that cess-pool which had venerated that innocence to such a point as not to leave upon it a single spot? What was this Jean Valjean educating Cosette? What was this figure of the shadows which had for its only object the preservation of the rising of a star from every shadow and from every cloud?

That was Jean Valjean's secret; that was also God's secret.

In the presence of this double secret, Marius recoiled. The one, in some sort, reassured him as to the other. God was as visible in this affair as was Jean Valjean. God has his instruments. He makes use of the tool which he wills. He is not responsible to men. Do we know how God sets about the work? Jean Valjean had labored over Cosette. He had, to some extent, made that soul. That was incontestable. Well, what then? The workman was horrible; but the work was admirable. God produces his miracles as seems good to him. He had constructed that charming Cosette, and he had employed Jean Valjean. It had pleased him to choose this strange collaborator for himself. What account have we to demand of him? Is this the first time that the dung-heap has aided the spring to create the rose?

Marius made himself these replies, and declared to himself that they were good. He had not dared to press Jean Valjean on all the points which we have just indicated, but he did not confess to himself that he did not dare to do it. He adored Cosette, he possessed Cosette, Cosette was splendidly pure. That was sufficient for him. What enlightenment did he need? Cosette was a light. Does light require enlightenment? He had everything; what more could he desire? All,—is not that enough? Jean Valjean's personal affairs did not concern him.

And bending over the fatal shadow of that man, he clung fast, convulsively, to the solemn declaration of that unhappy wretch: "I am nothing to Cosette. Ten years ago I did not know that she was in existence."

Jean Valjean was a passer-by. He had said so himself. Well, he had passed. Whatever he was, his part was finished.

Henceforth, there remained Marius to fulfil the part of Providence to Cosette. Cosette had sought the azure in a person like herself, in her lover, her husband, her celestial male. Cosette, as she took her flight, winged and trans-

figured, left behind her on the earth, her hideous and empty chrysalis, Jean Valjean.

In whatever circle of ideas Marius revolved, he always returned to a certain horror for Jean Valjean. A sacred horror, perhaps, for, as we have just pointed out, he felt a *quid divinum* in that man. But do what he would, and seek what extenuation he would, he was certainly forced to fall back upon this: the man was a convict; that is to say, a being who has not even a place in the social ladder, since he is lower than the very lowest rung. After the very last of men comes the convict. The convict is no longer, so to speak, in the semblance of the living. The law has deprived him of the entire quantity of humanity of which it can deprive a man.

Marius, on penal questions, still held to the inexorable system, though he was a democrat and he entertained all the ideas of the law on the subject of those whom the law strikes. He had not yet accomplished all progress, we admit. He had not yet come to distinguish between that which is written by man and that which is written by God, between law and right. He had not examined and weighed the right which man takes to dispose of the irrevocable and the irreparable. He was not shocked by the word *vindictæ*. He found it quite simple that certain breaches of the written law should be followed by eternal suffering, and he accepted, as the process of civilization, social damnation. He still stood at this point, though safe to advance infallibly later on, since his nature was good, and, at bottom, wholly formed of latent progress.

In this stage of his ideas, Jean Valjean appeared to him hideous and repulsive. He was a man reprovèd, he was the convict. That word was for him like the sound of the trumpet on the Day of Judgment; and, after having reflected upon Jean Valjean for a long time, his final gesture had been to turn away his head. *Vade retro.*

Marius, if we must recognize and even insist upon the fact, while interrogating Jean Valjean to such a point that Jean Valjean had said: "You are confessing me," had not, nevertheless, put to him two or three decisive questions.

It was not that they had not presented themselves to his mind, but that he had been afraid of them. The Jondrette attic? The barricade? Javert? Who knows where these revelations would have stopped? Jean Valjean did not seem like a man who would draw back, and who knows whether Marius, after having urged him on, would not have himself desired to hold him back?

Has it not happened to all of us, in certain supreme conjunctures, to stop our ears in order that we may not hear the reply, after we have asked a question? It is especially when one loves that one gives way to these exhibitions of cowardice. It is not wise to question sinister situations to the last point, particularly when the indissoluble side of our life is fatally intermingled with them. What a terrible light might have proceeded from the despairing explanations of Jean Valjean, and who knows whether that hideous glare would not have darted forth as far as Cosette? Who knows whether a sort of infernal glow would not have lingered behind it on the brow of that angel? The spattering of a lightning-flash is of the thunder also. Fatality has points of juncture where innocence itself is stamped with crime by the gloomy law of the reflections which give color. The purest figures may forever preserve the reflection of a horrible association. Rightly or wrongly, Marius had been afraid. He already knew too much. He sought to dull his senses rather than to gain further light.

In dismay he bore off Cosette in his arms and shut his eyes to Jean Valjean.

That man was the night, the living and horrible night. How should he dare to seek the bottom of it? It is a terrible thing to interrogate the shadow. Who knows what its reply will be? The dawn may be blackened forever by it.

In this state of mind the thought that that man would, henceforth, come into any contact whatever with Cosette was a heartrending perplexity to Marius.

He now almost reproached himself for not having put those formidable questions, before which he had recoiled, and from which an implacable and definitive decision might have sprung. He felt that he was too good, too gentle, too weak, if we must say the word. This weakness had led him to an imprudent concession. He had allowed himself to be touched. He had been in the wrong. He ought to have simply and purely rejected Jean Valjean. Jean Valjean played the part of fire, and that is what he should have done, and have freed his house from that man.

He was vexed with himself, he was angry with that whirlwind of emotions which had deafened, blinded, and carried him away. He was displeased with himself.

What was he to do now? Jean Valjean's visits were profoundly repugnant to him. What was the use in having that man in his house? What did the man want? Here, he

became dismayed, he did not wish to dig down, he did not wish to penetrate deeply; he did not wish to sound himself. He had promised, he had allowed himself to be drawn into a promise; Jean Valjean held his promise; one must keep one's word even to a convict, above all to a convict. Still, his first duty was to Cosette. In short, he was carried away by the repugnance which dominated him.

Marius turned over all this confusion of ideas in his mind, passing from one to the other, and moved by all of them. Hence arose a profound trouble.

It was not easy for him to hide this trouble from Cosette, but love is a talent, and Marius succeeded in doing it.

However, without any apparent object, he questioned Cosette, who was as candid as a dove is white and who suspected nothing; he talked of her childhood and her youth, and he became more and more convinced that that convict had been everything good, paternal and respectable that a man can be, towards Cosette. All that Marius had caught a glimpse of and had surmised was real. That sinister nettle had loved and protected that lily.



BOOK EIGHTH.—FADING AWAY OF THE TWILIGHT.

I.—THE LOWER CHAMBER.

ON the following day, at nightfall, Jean Valjean knocked at the carriage gate of the Gillenormand house. It was Basque who received him. Basque was in the courtyard at the appointed hour, as though he had received his orders. It sometimes happens that one says to a servant: "You will watch for Mr. So and So, when he arrives."

Basque addressed Jean Valjean without waiting for the latter to approach him:

"Monsieur le Baron has charged me to inquire whether monsieur desires to go upstairs or to remain below?"

"I will remain below," replied Jean Valjean.

Basque, who was perfectly respectful, opened the door of the waiting-room and said:

"I will go and inform Madame."

The room which Jean Valjean entered was a damp, vaulted

room on the ground floor, which served as a cellar on occasion, which opened on the street, was paved with red squares and was badly lighted by a grated window.

This chamber was not one of those which are harassed by the feather-duster, the pope's head brush, and the broom. The dust rested tranquilly there. Persecution of the spiders was not organized there. A fine web, which spread far and wide, and was very black and ornamented with dead flies, formed a wheel on one of the window-panes. The room, which was small and low-ceiled, was furnished with a heap of empty bottles piled up in one corner.

The wall, which was daubed with an ochre yellow wash, was scaling off in large flakes. At one end, there was a chimney-piece painted in black with a narrow shelf. A fire was burning there; which indicated that Jean Valjean's reply: "I will remain below," had been foreseen.

Two arm-chairs were placed at the two corners of the fireplace. Between the chairs an old bedside rug, which displayed more foundation thread than wool, had been spread by way of a carpet.

The chamber was lighted by the fire on the hearth and the twilight falling through the window.

Jean Valjean was fatigued. For days he had neither eaten nor slept. He threw himself into one of the arm-chairs.

Basque returned, set a lighted candle on the chimney-piece and retired. Jean Valjean, his head drooping and his chin resting on his breast, perceived neither Basque nor the candle.

All at once, he drew himself up with a start. Cosette was standing behind him.

He had not seen her enter, but he had felt that she was there.

He turned round. He gazed at her. She was adorably lovely. But what he was contemplating with that profound gaze was not her beauty but her soul.

"Well," exclaimed Cosette, "father, I knew that you were peculiar, but I never should have expected this. What an idea! Marius told me that you wish me to receive you here."

"Yes, it is my wish."

"I expected that reply. Good. I warn you that I am going to make a scene for you. Let us begin at the beginning. Embrace me, father."

And she offered him her cheek.

Jean Valjean remained motionless.

"You do not stir. I take note of it. Attitude of guilt.

But never mind, I pardon you. Jesus Christ said: Offer the other cheek. Here it is."

And she presented her other cheek.

Jean Valjean did not move. It seemed as though his feet were nailed to the pavement.

"This is becoming serious," said Cosette. "What have I done to you? I declare that I am perplexed. You owe me reparation. You will dine with us."

"I have dined."

"That is not true. I will get M. Gillenormand to scold you. Grandfathers are made to reprimand fathers. Come. Go upstairs with me to the drawing-room. Immediately."

"Impossible."

Here Cosette lost ground a little. She ceased to command and passed to questioning.

"But why? and you choose the ugliest chamber in the house in which to see me. It's horrible here."

"Thou knowest . . ."

Jean Valjean caught himself up.

"You know, madame, that I am peculiar, I have my freaks." Cosette struck her tiny hands together.

"Madame! . . . You know! . . . more novelties! What is the meaning of this?"

Jean Valjean directed upon her that heartrending smile to which he occasionally had recourse:

"You wished to be Madame. You are so."

"Not for you, father."

"Do not call me father."

"What?"

"Call me 'Monsieur Jean.' 'Jean,' if you like."

"You are no longer my father? I am no longer Cosette? 'Monsieur Jean'? What does this mean? why, these are revolutions, aren't they? what has taken place? come, look me in the face. And you won't live with us! And you won't have my chamber! What have I done to you? Has anything happened?"

"Nothing."

"Well then?"

"Everything is as usual."

"Why do you change your name?"

"You have changed yours, surely."

He smiled again with the same smile as before and added:

"Since you are Madame Pontmercy, I certainly can be Monsieur Jean."

"I don't understand anything about it. All this is idiotic. I shall ask permission of my husband for you to be 'Monsieur Jean.' I hope that he will not consent to it. You cause me a great deal of pain. One does have freaks, but one does not cause one's little Cosette grief. That is wrong. You have no right to be wicked, you who are so good."

He made no reply.

She seized his hands with vivacity, and raising them to her face with an irresistible movement, she pressed them against her neck beneath her chin, which is a gesture of profound tenderness.

"Oh!" she said to him, "be good!"

And she went on:

"This is what I call being good: being nice and coming and living here,—there are birds here as there are in the Rue Plumet,—living with us, quitting that hole of a Rue de l'Homme Armé, not giving us riddles to guess, being like all the rest of the world, dining with us, breakfasting with us, being my father."

He loosed her hands.

"You no longer need a father, you have a husband."

Cosette became angry.

"I no longer need a father! One really does not know what to say to things like that, which are not common sense!"

"If Toussaint were here," resumed Jean Valjean, like a person who is driven to seek authorities, and who clutches at every branch, "she would be the first to agree that it is true that I have always had ways of my own. There is nothing new in this. I always have loved my black corner."

"But it is cold here. One cannot see distinctly. It is abominable, that it is, to wish to be Monsieur Jean! I will not have you say 'you' to me."

"Just now, as I was coming hither," replied Jean Valjean, "I saw a piece of furniture in the Rue Saint Louis. It was at a cabinet-maker's. If I were a pretty woman, I would treat myself to that bit of furniture. A very neat toilet table; in the reigning style. What you call rosewood, I think. It is inlaid. The mirror is quite large. There are drawers. It is pretty."

"Hou! the villainous bear!" replied Cosette.

And with supreme grace, setting her teeth and drawing back her lips, she blew at Jean Valjean. She was a Grace copying a cat.

"I am furious," she resumed. "Ever since yesterday, you

have made me rage, all of you. I am greatly vexed. I don't understand. You do not defend me against Marius. Marius will not uphold me against you. I am all alone. I arrange a chamber prettily. If I could have put the good God there I would have done it. My chamber is left on my hands. My lodger sends me into bankruptcy. I order a nice little dinner of Nicolette. We will have nothing to do with your dinner, Madame. And my father Fauchelevent wants me to call him 'Monsieur Jean,' and to receive him in a frightful, old, ugly cellar, where the walls have beards, and where the crystal consists of empty bottles, and the curtains are of spiders' webs! You are singular, I admit, that is your style, but people who get married are granted a truce. You ought not to have begun being singular again instantly. So you are going to be perfectly contented in your abominable Rue de l'Homme Armé. I was very desperate indeed there, that I was. What have you against me? You cause me a great deal of grief. Fi!"

And, becoming suddenly serious, she gazed intently at Jean Valjean and added:

"Are you angry with me because I am happy?"

Ingenuousness sometimes unconsciously penetrates deep. This question, which was simple for Cosette, was profound for Jean Valjean. Cosette had meant to scratch, and she lacerated.

Jean Valjean turned pale.

He remained for a moment without replying, then, with an inexpressible intonation, and speaking to himself, he murmured:

"Her happiness was the object of my life. Now God may sign my dismissal. Cosette, thou art happy; my day is over."

"Ah! you have said *thou* to me!" exclaimed Cosette.

And she sprang to his neck.

Jean Valjean, in bewilderment, strained her wildly to his breast. It almost seemed to him as though he were taking her back.

"Thanks, father!" said Cosette.

This enthusiastic impulse was on the point of becoming poignant for Jean Valjean. He gently removed Cosette's arms, and took his hat.

"Well?" said Cosette.

"I leave you, Madame, they are waiting for you."

And, from the threshold, he added:

"I have said *thou* to you. Tell your husband that this shall not happen again. Pardon me."

Jean Valjean quitted the room, leaving Cosette stupefied at this enigmatical farewell.

II. — ANOTHER STEP BACKWARDS.

On the following day, at the same hour, Jean Valjean came.

Cosette asked him no questions, was no longer astonished, no longer exclaimed that she was cold, no longer spoke of the drawing-room, she avoided saying either "father," or "Monsieur Jean." She allowed herself to be addressed as *you*. She allowed herself to be called Madame. Only, her joy had undergone a certain diminution. She would have been sad, if sadness had been possible to her.

It is probable that she had had with Marius, one of those conversations in which the beloved man says what he pleases, explains nothing, and satisfies the beloved woman. The curiosity of lovers does not extend very far beyond their own love.

The lower room had made a little toilet. Basque had suppressed the bottles, and Nicolette the spiders.

All the days which followed brought Jean Valjean at the same hour. He came every day, because he had not the strength to take Marius' words otherwise than literally. Marius arranged matters so as to be absent at the hours when Jean Valjean came. The house grew accustomed to the novel ways of M. Fauchelevant. Toussaint helped in this direction: "Monsieur has always been like that," she repeated. The grandfather issued this decree:—"He's an original." And all was said. Moreover, at the age of ninety-six, no bond is any longer possible, all is merely juxtaposition; a newcomer is in the way. There is no longer any room; all habits are acquired. M. Fauchelevant, M. Tranchelevant, Father Gillenormand asked nothing better than to be relieved from "that gentleman." He added:—"Nothing is more common than those originals. They do all sorts of queer things. They have no reason. The Marquis de Canaples was still worse. He bought a palace that he might lodge in the garret. These are fantastic appearances that people affect."

No one caught a glimpse of the sinister foundation. And moreover, who could have guessed such a thing? There are marshes of this description in India. The water seems

extraordinary, inexplicable, rippling though there is no wind, and agitated where it should be calm. One gazes at the surface of these causeless ebullitions; one does not perceive the hydra which crawls on the bottom.

Many men have a secret monster in this same manner, a dragon which gnaws them, a despair which inhabits their night. Such a man resembles other men, he goes and comes. No one knows that he bears within him a frightful parasitic pain with a thousand teeth, which lives within the unhappy man, and of which he is dying. No one knows that this man is a gulf. He is stagnant but deep. From time to time, a trouble of which the on-looker understands nothing appears on his surface. A mysterious wrinkle is formed, then vanishes, then re-appears; an air-bubble rises and bursts. It is the breathing of the unknown beast.

Certain strange habits: arriving at the hour when other people are taking their leave, keeping in the background when other people are displaying themselves, preserving on all occasions, what may be designated as the wall-colored mantle, seeking the solitary walk, preferring the deserted street, avoiding any share in conversation, avoiding crowds and festivals, seeming at one's ease and living poorly, having one's key in one's pocket, and one's candle at the porter's lodge, however rich one may be, entering by the side door, ascending the private staircase, — all these insignificant singularities, fugitive folds on the surface, often proceed from a formidable foundation.

Many weeks passed in this manner. A new life gradually took possession of Cosette: the relations which marriage creates, visits, the care of the house, pleasures, great matters. Cosette's pleasures were not costly, they consisted in one thing: being with Marius. The great occupation of her life was to go out with him, to remain with him. It was for them a joy that was always fresh, to go out arm and arm, in the face of the sun, in the open street, without hiding themselves, before the whole world, both of them completely alone.

Cosette had one vexation. Toussaint could not get on with Nicolette, the soldering of two elderly maids being impossible, and she went away. The grandfather was well; Marius argued a case here and there; Aunt Gillenormand peacefully led that life aside which sufficed for her, beside the new household. Jean Valjean came every day.

The address as *thou* disappeared, the *you*, the "Madame,"

the "Monsieur Jean," rendered him another person to Cosette. The care which he had himself taken to detach her from him was succeeding. She became more and more gay and less and less tender. Yet she still loved him sincerely, and he felt it.

One day she said to him suddenly: "You used to be my father, you are no longer my father, you were my uncle, you are no longer my uncle, you were Monsieur Fauchelevent, you are Jean. Who are you then? I don't like all this. If I did not know how good you are, I should be afraid of you."

He still lived in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, because he could not make up his mind to remove to a distance from the quarter where Cosette dwelt.

At first, he only remained a few minutes with Cosette, and then went away.

Little by little he acquired the habit of making his visits less brief. One would have said that he was taking advantage of the authorization of the days which were lengthening: he arrived earlier and departed later.

One day Cosette chanced to say "father" to him. A flash of joy illuminated Jean Valjean's melancholy old countenance. He caught her up: "Say Jean." — "Ah! truly," she replied with a burst of laughter, "Monsieur Jean." — "That is right," said he. And he turned aside so that she might not see him wipe his eyes.

III. — THEY RECALL THE GARDEN OF THE RUE PLUMET.

THIS was the last time. After that last flash of light, complete extinction ensued. No more familiarity, no more good-morning with a kiss, never more that word so profoundly sweet: "My father!" He was at his own request and through his own complicity driven out of all his happinesses one after the other; and he had this sorrow, that after having lost Cosette wholly in one day, he was afterwards obliged to lose her again in detail.

The eye eventually becomes accustomed to the light of a cellar. In short, it sufficed for him to have an apparition of Cosette every day. His whole life was concentrated in that one hour.

He seated himself close to her, he gazed at her in silence, or he talked to her of years gone by, of her childhood, of the convent, of her little friends of those bygone days.

One afternoon, — it was on one of those early days in April,

already warm and fresh, the moment of the sun's great gayety, the gardens which surrounded the windows of Marius and Cosette felt the emotion of waking, the hawthorn was on the point of budding, a jewelled garniture of gillyflowers spread over the ancient walls, snapdragons yawned through the crevices of the stones, amid the grass there was a charming beginning of daisies, and buttercups, the white butterflies of the year were making their first appearance, the wind, that minstrel of the eternal wedding, was trying in the trees the first notes of that grand, auroral symphony which the old poets called the springtide, — Marius said to Cosette: — “We said that we would go back to take a look at our garden in the Rue Plumet. Let us go thither. We must not be ungrateful.” — And away they fittled, like two swallows towards the spring. This garden of the Rue Plumet produced on them the effect of the dawn. They already had behind them in life something which was like the springtime of their love. The house in the Rue Plumet being held on a lease, still belonged to Cosette. They went to that garden and that house. There they found themselves again, there they forgot themselves. That evening, at the usual hour, Jean Valjean came to the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire. — “Madame went out with Monsieur and has not yet returned,” Basque said to him. He seated himself in silence, and waited an hour. Cosette did not return. He departed with drooping head.

Cosette was so intoxicated with her walk to “their garden,” and so joyous at having “lived a whole day in her past,” that she talked of nothing else on the morrow. She did not notice that she had not seen Jean Valjean.

“In what way did you go thither?” Jean Valjean asked her.

“On foot.”

“And how did you return?”

“In a hackney carriage.”

For some time, Jean Valjean had noticed the economical life led by the young couple. He was troubled by it. Marius' economy was severe, and that word had its absolute meaning for Jean Valjean. He hazarded a query:

“Why do not you have a carriage of your own? A pretty coupé would only cost you five hundred francs a month. You are rich.”

“I don't know,” replied Cosette.

“It is like Toussaint,” resumed Jean Valjean. “She is gone. You have not replaced her. Why?”

"Nicolette suffices."

"But you ought to have a maid."

"Have I not Marius?"

"You ought to have a house of your own, your own servants, a carriage, a box at the theatre. There is nothing too fine for you. Why not profit by your riches? Wealth adds to happiness."

Cosette made no reply.

Jean Valjean's visits were not abridged. Far from it. When it is the heart which is slipping, one does not halt on the downward slope.

When Jean Valjean wished to prolong his visit and to induce forgetfulness of the hour, he sang the praises of Marius; he pronounced him handsome, noble, courageous, witty, eloquent, good. Cosette outdid him. Jean Valjean began again. They were never weary. Marius—that word was inexhaustible; those six letters contained volumes. In this manner, Jean Valjean contrived to remain a long time.

It was so sweet to see Cosette, to forget by her side! It alleviated his wounds. It frequently happened that Basque came twice to announce: "M. Gillenormand sends me to remind Madame la Baronne that dinner is served."

On those days, Jean Valjean was very thoughtful on his return home.

Was there then, any truth in that comparison of the chrysalis which had presented itself to the mind of Marius? Was Jean Valjean really a chrysalis who would persist, and who would come to visit his butterfly?

One day he remained still longer than usual. On the following day he observed that there was no fire on the hearth. — "Hello!" he thought. "No fire." — And he furnished the explanation for himself. — "It is perfectly simple. It is April. The cold weather has ceased."

"Heavens! how cold it is here!" exclaimed Cosette when she entered.

"Why, no," said Jean Valjean.

"Was it you who told Basque not to make a fire then?"

"Yes, since we are now in the month of May."

"But we have a fire until June. One is needed all the year in this cellar."

"I thought that a fire was unnecessary."

"That is exactly like one of your ideas!" retorted Cosette.

On the following day there was a fire. But the two arm-chairs were arranged at the other end of the room near

the door. "— What is the meaning of this ?" thought Jean Valjean.

He went for the arm-chairs and restored them to their ordinary place near the hearth.

This fire lighted once more encouraged him, however. He prolonged the conversation even beyond its customary limits. As he rose to take his leave, Cosette said to him :

"My husband said a queer thing to me yesterday."

"What was it ?"

"He said to me: 'Cosette, we have an income of thirty thousand livres. Twenty-seven that you own, and three that my grandfather gives me.' I replied: 'That makes thirty.' He went on: 'Would you have the courage to live on the three thousand?' I answered: 'Yes, on nothing. Provided that it was with you.' And then I asked: 'Why do you say that to me?' He replied: 'I wanted to know.'"

Jean Valjean found not a word to answer. Cosette probably expected some explanation from him ; he listened in gloomy silence. He went back to the Rue de l'Homme Armé ; he was so deeply absorbed that he mistook the door and instead of entering his own house, he entered the adjoining dwelling. It was only after having ascended nearly two stories that he perceived his error and went down again.

His mind was swarming with conjectures. It was evident that Marius had his doubts as to the origin of the six hundred thousand francs, that he feared some source that was not pure, who knows ? that he had even, perhaps, discovered that the money came from him, Jean Valjean, that he hesitated before this suspicious fortune, and was disinclined to take it as his own, — preferring that both he and Cosette should remain poor, rather than that they should be rich with wealth that was not clean.

Moreover, Jean Valjean began vaguely to surmise that he was being shown the door.

On the following day, he underwent something like a shock on entering the ground-floor room. The arm-chairs had disappeared. There was not a single chair of any sort.

"Ah, what's this !" exclaimed Cosette as she entered, "no chairs ! Where are the arm-chairs ?"

"They are no longer here," replied Jean Valjean.

"This is too much !"

Jean Valjean stammered :

"It was I who told Basque to remove them."

"And your reason ?"

"I have only a few minutes to stay to-day."

"A brief stay is no reason for remaining standing."

"I think that Basque needed the chairs for the drawing-room."

"Why?"

"You have company this evening, no doubt."

"We expect no one."

Jean Valjean had not another word to say.

Cosette shrugged her shoulders.

"To have the chairs carried off! The other day you had the fire put out. How odd you are!"

"Adieu!" murmured Jean Valjean.

He did not say: "Adieu, Cosette." But he had not the strength to say: "Adieu, Madame."

He went away utterly overwhelmed.

This time he had understood.

On the following day he did not come. Cosette only observed the fact in the evening.

"Why," said she, "Monsieur Jean has not been here to-day."

And she felt a slight twinge at her heart, but she hardly perceived it, being immediately diverted by a kiss from Marius.

On the following day he did not come.

Cosette paid no heed to this, passed her evening and slept well that night, as usual, and thought of it only when she woke. She was so happy! She speedily despatched Nicolette to M. Jean's house to inquire whether he were ill, and why he had not come on the previous evening. Nicolette brought back the reply of M. Jean that he was not ill. He was busy. He would come soon. As soon as he was able. Moreover, he was on the point of taking a little journey. Madame must remember that it was his custom to take trips from time to time. They were not to worry about him. They were not to think of him.

Nicolette on entering M. Jean's had repeated to him her mistress' very words. That Madame had sent to inquire why M. Jean had not come on the preceding evening. "—It is two days since I have been there," said Jean Valjean gently.

But the remark passed unnoticed by Nicolette, who did not report it to Cosette.

IV. — ATTRACTION AND EXTINCTION.

DURING the last months of spring and the first months of summer in 1833, the rare passers-by in the Marais, the petty shopkeepers, the loungers on thresholds, noticed an old man neatly clad in black, who emerged every day at the same hour, towards nightfall, from the Rue de l'Homme Armé, on the side of the Rue Sainte-Croix-de-la-Bretonnerie, passed in front of the Blancs Manteaux, gained the Rue Culture-Sainte-Catherine, and, on arriving at the Rue de l'Écharpe, turned to the left, and entered the Rue Saint-Louis.

There he walked at a slow pace, with his head strained forward, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, his eye immovably fixed on a point which seemed to be a star to him, which never varied, and which was no other than the corner of the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire. The nearer he approached the corner of the street the more his eye lighted up; a sort of joy illuminated his pupils like an inward aurora, he had a fascinated and much affected air, his lips indulged in obscure movements, as though he were talking to some one whom he did not see, he smiled vaguely and advanced as slowly as possible. One would have said that, while desirous of reaching his destination, he feared the moment when he should be close at hand. When only a few houses remained between him and that street which appeared to attract him his pace slackened, to such a degree that, at times, one might have thought that he was no longer advancing at all. The vacillation of his head and the fixity of his eyeballs suggested the thought of the magnetic needle seeking the pole. Whatever time he spent on arriving, he was obliged to arrive at last; he reached the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire; then he halted, he trembled, he thrust his head with a sort of melancholy timidity round the corner of the last house, and gazed into that street, and there was in that tragic look something which resembled the dazzling light of the impossible, and the reflection from a paradise that was closed to him. Then a tear, which had slowly gathered in the corner of his lids, and had become large enough to fall, trickled down his cheek, and sometimes stopped at his mouth. The old man tasted its bitter flavor. Thus he remained for several minutes as though made of stone, then he returned by the same road and with the same step, and, in proportion as he retreated, his glance died out.

Little by little, this old man ceased to go as far as the

corner of the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire; he halted half way in the Rue Saint-Louis; sometimes a little further off, sometimes a little nearer.

One day he stopped at the corner of the Rue Culture-Sainte-Catherine and looked at the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire from a distance. Then he shook his head slowly from right to left, as though refusing himself something, and retraced his steps.

Soon he no longer came as far as the Rue Saint-Louis. He got as far as the Rue Pavée, shook his head and turned back; then he went no further than the Rue des Trois-Pavillons; then he did not overstep the Blancs-Manteaux. One would have said that he was a pendulum which was no longer wound up, and whose oscillations were growing shorter before ceasing altogether.

Every day he emerged from his house at the same hour, he undertook the same trip, but he no longer completed it, and, perhaps without himself being aware of the fact, he constantly shortened it. His whole countenance expressed this single idea: What is the use? — His eye was dim; no more radiance. His tears were also exhausted; they no longer collected in the corner of his eye-lid; that thoughtful eye was dry. The old man's head was still craned forward; his chin moved at times; the folds in his gaunt neck were painful to behold. Sometimes, when the weather was bad, he had an umbrella under his arm, but he never opened it.

The good women of the quarter said: "He is an innocent." The children followed him and laughed.



BOOK NINTH.—SUPREME SHADOW, SUPREME DAWN.

I.—PITY FOR THE UNHAPPY, BUT INDULGENCE FOR THE HAPPY.

It is a terrible thing to be happy! How content one is! How all-sufficient one finds it! How, being in possession of the false object of life, happiness, one forgets the true object, duty!

Let us say, however, that the reader would do wrong were he to blame Marius.

Marius, as we have explained, before his marriage, had put no questions to M. Fauchelevent, and, since that time, he had

feared to put any to Jean Valjean. He had regretted the promise into which he had allowed himself to be drawn. He had often said to himself that he had done wrong in making that concession to despair. He had confined himself to gradually estranging Jean Valjean from his house and to effacing him, as much as possible, from Cosette's mind. He had, in a manner, always placed himself between Cosette and Jean Valjean, sure that, in this way, she would not perceive nor think of the latter. It was more than effacement, it was an eclipse.

Marius did what he considered necessary and just. He thought that he had serious reasons which the reader has already seen, and others which will be seen later on, for getting rid of Jean Valjean without harshness, but without weakness.

Chance having ordained that he should encounter, in a case which he had argued, a former employee of the Laffitte establishment, he had acquired mysterious information, without seeking it, which he had not been able, it is true, to probe, out of respect for the secret which he had promised to guard, and out of consideration for Jean Valjean's perilous position. He believed at that moment, that he had a grave duty to perform: the restitution of the six hundred thousand francs to some one whom he sought with all possible discretion. In the meanwhile, he abstained from touching that money.

As for Cosette, she had not been initiated into any of these secrets; but it would be harsh to condemn her also.

There existed between Marius and her an all-powerful magnetism, which caused her to do, instinctively and almost mechanically, what Marius wished. She was conscious of Marius' will in the direction of "Monsieur Jean," she conformed to it. Her husband had not been obliged to say anything to her; she yielded to the vague but clear pressure of his tacit intentions, and obeyed blindly. Her obedience in this instance, consisted in not remembering what Marius forgot. She was not obliged to make any effort to accomplish this. Without her knowing why herself, and without his having any cause to accuse her of it, her soul had become so wholly her husband's that that which was shrouded in gloom in Marius, mind, became overcast in hers.

Let us not go too far, however; in what concerns Jean Valjean, this forgetfulness and obliteration were merely superficial. She was rather heedless than forgetful. At bottom, she was sincerely attached to the man whom she had so long called her father; but she loved her husband still more dearly.

This was what had somewhat disturbed the balance of her heart, which leaned to one side only.

It sometimes happened that Cosette spoke of Jean Valjean and expressed her surprise. Then Marius calmed her; "He is absent, I think. Did not he say that he was setting out on a journey?" — "That is true," thought Cosette. "He had a habit of disappearing in this fashion. But not for so long." Two or three times she despatched Nicolette to inquire in the Rue de l'Homme Armé whether M. Jean had returned from his journey. Jean Valjean caused the answer "no" to be given.

Cosette asked nothing more, since she had but one need on earth, Marius.

Let us also say that, on their side, Cosette and Marius had also been absent. They had been to Vernon. Marius had taken Cosette to his father's grave.

Marius gradually won Cosette away from Jean Valjean. Cosette allowed it.

Moreover that which is called, far too harshly in certain cases, the ingratitude of children, is not always a thing so deserving of reproach as it is supposed. It is the ingratitude of nature. Nature, as we have elsewhere said, "looks before her." Nature divides living beings into those who are arriving and those who are departing. Those who are departing are turned towards the shadows, those who are arriving towards the light. Hence a gulf which is fatal on the part of the old, and involuntary on the part of the young. This breach, at first insensible, increases slowly, like all separations of branches. The boughs, without becoming detached from the trunk, grow away from it. It is no fault of theirs. Youth goes where there is joy, festivals, vivid lights, love. Old age goes towards the end. They do not lose sight of each other, but there is no longer a close connection. Young people feel the cooling off of life; old people, that of the tomb. Let us not blame these poor children.

II. — LAST FLICKERINGS OF A LAMP WITHOUT OIL.

ONE day, Jean Valjean descended his staircase, took three steps in the street, seated himself on a post, on that same stone post where Gavroche had found him meditating on the night between the 5th and the 6th of June; he remained there a few moments, then went up stairs again. This was the last oscillation of the pendulum. On the following day he

did not leave his apartment. On the day after that, he did not leave his bed.

His portress, who prepared his scanty repasts, a few cabages or potatoes with bacon, glanced at the brown earthenware plate and exclaimed :

"But you ate nothing yesterday, poor, dear man."

"Certainly I did," replied Jean Valjean.

"The plate is quite full."

"Look at the water jug. It is empty."

"That proves that you have drunk; it does not prove that you have eaten."

"Well," said Jean Valjean, "what if I felt hungry only for water?"

"That is called thirst, and, when one does not eat at the same time, it is called fever."

"I will eat to-morrow."

"Or at Trinity day. Why not to-day? Is it the thing to say: 'I will eat to-morrow'? The idea of leaving my platter without even touching it! My lady-finger potatoes were so good!"

Jean Valjean took the old woman's hand :

"I promise you that I will eat them," he said, in his benevolent voice.

"I am not pleased with you," replied the portress.

Jean Valjean saw no other human creature than this good woman. There are streets in Paris through which no one ever passes, and houses to which no one ever comes. He was in one of those streets and one of those houses.

While he still went out, he had purchased of a copper-smith, for a few sous a little copper crucifix which he had hung up on a nail opposite his bed. That gibbet is always good to look at.

A week passed, and Jean Valjean had not taken a step in his room. He still remained in bed. The portress said to her husband : — "The goodman upstairs yonder does not get up, he no longer eats, he will not last long. That man has his sorrows, that he has. You won't get it out of my head that his daughter has made a bad marriage."

The porter replied, with the tone of marital sovereignty :

"If he's rich, let him have a doctor. If he is not rich, let him go without. If he has no doctor he will die."

"And if he has one?"

"He will die," said the porter.

The portress set to scraping away the grass from what she

called her pavement, with an old knife, and, as she tore out the blades, she grumbled:

"It's a shame. Such a neat old man! He's as white as a chicken."

She caught sight of the doctor of the quarter as he passed the end of the street; she took it upon herself to request him to come up stairs.

"It's on the second floor," said she. "You have only to enter. As the good man no longer stirs from his bed, the door is always unlocked."

The doctor saw Jean Valjean and spoke with him.

When he came down again the portress interrogated him:

"Well, doctor?"

"Your sick man is very ill indeed."

"What is the matter with him?"

"Everything and nothing. He is a man who, to all appearances, has lost some person who is dear to him. People die of that."

"What did he say to you?"

"He told me that he was in good health."

"Shall you come again, doctor?"

"Yes," replied the doctor. "But some one else besides must come."

III.—A PEN IS HEAVY TO THE MAN WHO LIFTED THE FAUCHELEVENT'S CART.

ONE evening Jean Valjean found difficulty in raising himself on his elbow; he felt of his wrist and could not find his pulse; his breath was short and halted at times; he recognized the fact that he was weaker than he had ever been before. Then, no doubt under the pressure of some supreme preoccupation, he made an effort, drew himself up into a sitting posture and dressed himself. He put on his old workingman's clothes. As he no longer went out, he had returned to them and preferred them. He was obliged to pause many times while dressing himself; merely putting his arms through his waistcoat made the perspiration trickle from his forehead.

Since he had been alone, he had placed his bed in the ante-chamber, in order to inhabit that deserted apartment as little as possible.

He opened the valise and drew from it Cosette's outfit.

He spread it out on his bed.

The Bishop's candlesticks were in their place on the chim-

ney-piece. He took from a drawer two wax candles and put them in the candlesticks. Then, although it was still broad daylight, — it was summer, — he lighted them. In the same way candles are to be seen lighted in broad daylight in chambers where there is a corpse.

Every step that he took in going from one piece of furniture to another exhausted him, and he was obliged to sit down. It was not ordinary fatigue which expends the strength only to renew it; it was the remnant of all movement possible to him; it was life drained which flows away drop by drop in overwhelming efforts and which will never be renewed.

The chair into which he allowed himself to fall was placed in front of that mirror, so fatal for him, so providential for Marius, in which he had read Cosette's reversed writing on the blotting book. He caught sight of himself in this mirror, and did not recognize himself. He was eighty years old; before Marius' marriage, he would have hardly been taken for fifty; that year had counted for thirty. What he bore on his brow was no longer the wrinkles of age, it was the mysterious mark of death. The hollowing of that pitiless nail could be felt there. His cheeks were pendulous; the skin of his face had the color which would lead one to think that it already had earth upon it; the corners of his mouth drooped as in the mask which the ancients sculptured on tombs. He gazed into space with an air of reproach; one would have said that he was one of those grand tragic beings who have cause to complain of some one.

He was in that condition, the last phase of dejection, in which sorrow no longer flows; it is coagulated, so to speak; there is something on the soul like a clot of despair.

Night had come. He laboriously dragged a table and the old arm-chair to the fireside, and placed upon the table a pen, some ink and some paper.

That done, he had a fainting fit. When he recovered consciousness, he was thirsty. As he could not lift the jug, he tipped it over painfully towards his mouth, and swallowed a draught.

As neither the pen nor the ink had been used for a long time, the point of the pen had curled up, the ink had dried away, he was forced to rise and put a few drops of water in the ink, which he did not accomplish without pausing and sitting down two or three times, and he was compelled to write with the back of the pen. He wiped his brow from time to time.

Then he turned towards the bed, and, still seated, for he could not stand, he gazed at the little black gown and all those beloved objects.

These contemplations lasted for hours which seemed minutes.

All at once he shivered, he felt that a child was taking possession of him; he rested his elbows on the table, which was illuminated by the Bishop's candles and took up the pen. His hand trembled. He wrote slowly the few following lines:

"Cosette, I bless thee. I am going to explain to thee. Thy husband was right in giving me to understand that I ought to go away; but there is a little error in what he believed, though he was in the right. He is excellent. Love him well even after I am dead. Monsieur Pontmercy, love my darling child well. Cosette, this paper will be found; this is what I wish to say to thee, thou wilt see the figures, if I have the strength to recall them, listen well, this money is really thine. Here is the whole matter: White jet comes from Norway, black jet comes from England, black glass jewellery comes from Germany. Jet is the lightest, the most precious, the most costly. Imitations can be made in France as well as in Germany. What is needed is a little anvil two inches square, and a lamp burning spirits of wine to soften the wax. The wax was formerly made with resin and lampblack, and cost four livres the pound. I invented a way of making it with gum shellac and turpentine. It does not cost more than thirty sous, and is much better. Buckles are made with a violet glass which is stuck fast, by means of this wax, to a little framework of black iron. The glass must be violet for iron jewellery, and black for gold jewellery. Spain buys a great deal of it. It is the country of jet . . ."

Here he paused, the pen fell from his fingers, he was seized by one of those sobs which at times, welled up from the very depths of his being; the poor man clasped his head in both hands, and meditated.

"Oh!" he exclaimed within himself [lamentable cries, heard by God alone], "all is over. I shall never see her more. She is a smile which passed over me. I am about to plunge into the night without even seeing her again. Oh! one minute, one instant, to hear her voice, to touch her dress, to gaze upon her, upon her, the angel! and then to die! It is nothing to die, what is frightful is to die without seeing her. She would smile on me, she would say a word to me, would that do any harm to anyone? No, all is over, and forever

Here I am all alone. My God! My God! I shall never see her again!"

At that moment there came a knock at the door.

IV.—A BOTTLE OF INK WHICH ONLY SUCCEEDED IN WHITENING.

THAT same day, or to speak more accurately, that same evening, as Marius left the table, and was on the point of withdrawing to his study, having a case to look over, Basque handed him a letter saying: "The person who wrote the letter is in the antechamber."

Cosette had taken the grandfather's arm and was strolling in the garden.

A letter, like a man, may have an unprepossessing exterior. Coarse paper, coarsely folded — the very sight of certain mis-sives is displeasing.

The letter which Basque had brought was of this sort.

Marius took it. It smelled of tobacco. Nothing evokes a memory like an odor. Marius recognized that tobacco. He looked at the superscription: "To Monsieur, Monsieur le Baron Pommereh. At his hotel." The recognition of the tobacco caused him to recognize the writing as well. It may be said that amazement has its lightning flashes.

Marius was, as it were, illuminated by one of these flashes.

The sense of smell, that mysterious aid to memory, had just revived a whole world within him. This was certainly the paper, the fashion of folding, the dull tint of ink; it was certainly the well-known handwriting, especially was it the same tobacco.

The Jondrette garret rose before his mind.

Thus, strange freak of chance! one of the two scents which he had so diligently sought, the one in connection with which he had lately again exerted so many efforts, and which he supposed to be forever lost, had come and presented itself to him of its own accord.

He eagerly broke the seal, and read:

"Monsieur le Baron: — If the Supreme Being had given me the talents, I might have been baron Thénard, member of the Institute [academy of sciences], but I am not. I only bear the same name as him, happy if this memory recommends me to the excellence of your kindnesses. The benefit with which you will honor me will be reciprocal. I am in possession of a secret concerning an individual. This individual concerns you. I hold the secret at your disposal desiring to have the honor to be useful to you. I will furnish you with the simple means of driving from your honorable family that individual who has no right there, madame la baronne being

of lofty birth. The sanctuary of virtue cannot cohabit longer with crime without abdicating.

I await in the entichamber the orders of monsieur le baron.

“With respect.”

The letter was signed “Thénard.”

This signature was not false. It was merely a trifle abridged.

Moreover, the rigmarole and the orthography completed the revelation. The certificate of origin was complete.

Marius’ emotion was profound. After a start of surprise, he underwent a feeling of happiness. If he could now but find that other man of whom he was in search, the man who had saved him, Marius, there would be nothing left for him to desire.

He opened the drawer of his secretary, took out several bank-notes, put them in his pocket, closed the secretary again, and rang the bell. Basque half opened the door.

“Show the man in,” said Marius.

Basque announced :

“Monsieur Thénard.”

A man entered.

A fresh surprise for Marius. The man who entered was an utter stranger to him.

This man, who was old, moreover, had a thick nose, his chin swathed in a cravat, green spectacles with a double screen of green taffeta over his eyes, and his hair was plastered and flattened down on his brow on a level with his eyebrows like the wigs of English coachmen in “high life.” His hair was gray. He was dressed in black from head to foot, in garments that were very threadbare but clean; a bunch of seals depending from his fob suggested the idea of a watch. He held in his hand an old hat! He walked in a bent attitude, and the curve in his spine augmented the profundity of his bow.

The first thing that struck the observer was, that this personage’s coat, which was too ample although carefully buttoned, had not been made for him.

Here a short digression becomes necessary.

There was in Paris at that epoch, in a low-lived old lodging in the Rue Beautreillis, near the Arsenal, an ingenious Jew whose profession was to change villains into honest men. Not for too long, which might have proved embarrassing for the villain. The change was on sight, for a day or two, at the rate of thirty sous a day, by means of a costume which resembled the honesty of the world in general as nearly as

possible. This costumer was called "the Changer"; the pickpockets of Paris had given him this name and knew him by no other. He had a tolerably complete wardrobe. The rags with which he tricked out people were almost probable. He had specialties and categories; on each nail of his shop hung a social status, threadbare and worn; here the suit of a magistrate, there the outfit of a Curé, beyond the outfit of a banker, in one corner the costume of a retired military man, elsewhere the habiliments of a man of letters, and further on the dress of a statesman.

This creature was the costumer of the immense drama which knavery plays in Paris. His lair was the green-room whence theft emerged, and into which roguery retreated. A tattered knave arrived at this dressing-room, deposited his thirty sous and selected, according to the part which he wished to play, the costume which suited him, and on descending the stairs once more, the knave was a somebody. On the following day the clothes were faithfully returned, and the Changer, who trusted the thieves with everything, was never robbed. There was one inconvenience about these clothes, they "did not fit"; not having been made for those who wore them, they were too tight for one, too loose for another and did not adjust themselves to any one. Every pickpocket who exceeded or fell short of the human average was ill at his ease in the Changer's costumes. It was necessary that one should not be either too fat or too lean. The changer had foreseen only ordinary men. He had taken the measure of the species from the first rascal who came to hand, who is neither stout nor thin, neither tall nor short. Hence adaptations which were sometimes difficult and from which the Changer's clients extricated themselves as best they might. So much the worse for the exceptions! The suit of the statesman, for instance, black from head to foot, and consequently proper, would have been too large for Pitt and too small for Castelfidardo. The costume of a statesman was designated as follows in the Changer's catalogue; we copy:

"A coat of black cloth, trowsers of black wool, a silk waistcoat, boots and linen." On the margin there stood: *ex-ambassador*, and a note which we also copy: "In a separate box, a neatly frizzed peruke, green glasses, seals, and two small quills an inch long, wrapped in cotton." All this belonged to the statesman, the *ex-ambassador*. This whole costume was, if we may so express ourselves, debilitated; the seams were white, a vague button-hole yawned at one of the elbows; moreover,

one of the coat buttons was missing on the breast; but this was only a detail; as the hand of the statesman should always be thrust into his coat and laid upon his heart, its function was to conceal the absent button.

If Marius had been familiar with the occult institutions of Paris, he would instantly have recognized upon the back of the visitor whom Basque had just shown in, the statesman's suit borrowed from the pick-me-down-that shop of the Changer.

Marius' disappointment on beholding another man than the one whom he expected to see turned to the newcomer's disadvantage.

He surveyed him from head to foot, while that personage made exaggerated bows, and demanded in a curt tone:

"What do you want?"

The man replied with an amiable grin of which the caressing smile of a crocodile will furnish some idea:

"It seems to me impossible that I should not have already had the honor of seeing Monsieur le Baron in society. I think I actually did meet monsieur personally, several years ago, at the house of Madame la Princesse Bagration and in the drawing-rooms of his Lordship the Vicomte Dambray, peer of France."

It is always a good bit of tactics in knavery to pretend to recognize some one whom one does not know.

Marius paid attention to the manner of this man's speech. He spied on his accent and gesture, but his disappointment increased; the pronunciation was nasal and absolutely unlike the dry, shrill tone which he had expected.

He was utterly routed.

"I know neither Madame Bagration nor M. Dambray," said he. "I have never set foot in the house of either of them in my life."

The reply was ungracious. The personage, determined to be gracious at any cost, insisted.

"Then it must have been at Chateaubriand's that I have seen Monsieur! I know Chateaubriand very well. He is very affable. He sometimes says to me: 'Thénard, my friend . . . won't you drink a glass of wine with me?'"

Marius' brow grew more and more severe:

"I have never had the honor of being received by M. de Chateaubriand. Let us cut it short. What do you want?"

The man bowed lower at that harsh voice.

"Monsieur le Baron, deign to listen to me. There is in America, in a district near Panama, a village called la Joya.

That village is composed of a single house, a large, square house of three stories, built of bricks dried in the sun, each side of the square five hundred feet in length, each story retreating twelve feet back of the story below, in such a manner as to leave in front a terrace which makes the circuit of the edifice, in the centre an inner court where the provisions and munitions are kept; no windows, loopholes, no doors, ladders, ladders to mount from the ground to the first terrace, and from the first to the second, and from the second to the third, ladders to descend into the inner court, no doors to the chambers, trap-doors, no staircases to the chambers, ladders; in the evening the traps are closed, the ladders are withdrawn, carbines and blunderbusses trained from the loopholes; no means of entering, a house by day, a citadel by night, eight hundred inhabitants, — that is the village. Why so many precautions? because the country is dangerous; it is full of cannibals. Then why do people go there? because the country is marvellous; gold is found there."

"What are you driving at?" interrupted Marius, who had passed from disappointment to impatience.

"At this, Monsieur le Baron. I am an old and weary diplomat. Ancient civilization has thrown me on my own devices. I want to try savages."

"Well?"

"Monsieur le Baron, egotism is the law of the world. The proletarian peasant woman, who toils by the day, turns round when the diligence passes by, the peasant proprietress, who toils in her field, does not turn round. The dog of the poor man barks at the rich man, the dog of the rich man barks at the poor man. Each one for himself. Self-interest — that's the object of men. Gold, that's the loadstone."

"What then? Finish."

"I should like to go and establish myself at la Joya. There are three of us. I have my spouse and my young lady; a very beautiful girl. The journey is long and costly. I need a little money."

"What concern is that of mine?" demanded Marius.

The stranger stretched his neck out of his cravat, a gesture characteristic of the vulture, and replied with an augmented smile:

"Has not Monsieur le Baron perused my letter?"

There was some truth in this. The fact is, that the contents of the epistle had slipped Marius' mind. He had seen the writing rather than read the letter. He could hardly recall

it. But a moment ago a fresh start had been given him. He had noted that detail: "my spouse and my young lady."

He fixed a penetrating glance on the stranger. An examining judge could not have done the look better. He almost lay in wait for him.

He confined himself to replying:

"State the case precisely."

The stranger inserted his two hands in both his fobs, drew himself up without straightening his dorsal column, but scrutinizing Marius in his turn, with the green gaze of his spectacles.

"So be it, Monsieur le Baron. I will be precise. I have a secret to sell to you."

"A secret?"

"A secret."

"Which concerns me?"

"Somewhat."

"What is the secret?"

Marius scrutinized the man more and more as he listened to him.

"I commence gratis," said the stranger. "You will see that I am interesting."

"Speak."

"Monsieur le Baron, you have in your house a thief and an assassin."

Marius shuddered.

"In my house? no," said he.

The imperturbable stranger brushed his hat with his elbow, and went on:

"An assassin and a thief. Remark, Monsieur le Baron, that I do not here speak of ancient deeds, deeds of the past which have lapsed, which can be effaced by limitation before the law and by repentance before God. I speak of recent deeds, of actual facts as still unknown to justice at this hour. I continue. This man has insinuated himself into your confidence, and almost into your family under a false name. I am about to tell you his real name. And to tell it to you for nothing."

"I am listening."

"His name is Jean Valjean."

"I know it."

"I am going to tell you, equally for nothing, who he is."

"Say on."

"He is an ex-convict."

"I know it."

"You know it since I have had the honor of telling you."

"No. I knew it before."

Marius' cold tone, that double reply of "I know it," his laconicism, which was not favorable to dialogue, stirred up some smouldering wrath in the stranger. He launched a furious glance on the sly at Marius, which was instantly extinguished. Rapid as it was, this glance was of the kind which a man recognizes when he has once beheld it; it did not escape Marius. Certain flashes can only proceed from certain souls; the eye, that vent-hole of the thought, glows with it; spectacles hide nothing; try putting a pane of glass over hell!

The stranger resumed with a smile:

"I will not permit myself to contradict Monsieur le Baron. In any case, you ought to perceive that I am well informed. Now what I have to tell you is known to myself alone. This concerns the fortune of Madame la Baronne. It is an extraordinary secret. It is for sale — I make you the first offer of it. Cheap. Twenty thousand francs."

"I know that secret as well as the others," said Marius.

The personage felt the necessity of lowering his price a trifle.

"Monsieur le Baron, say ten thousand francs and I will speak."

"I repeat to you that there is nothing which you can tell me. I know what you wish to say to me."

A fresh flash gleamed in the man's eye. He exclaimed:

"But I must dine today, nevertheless. It is an extraordinary secret, I tell you. Monsieur le Baron, I will speak. I speak. Give me twenty francs."

Marius gazed intently at him:

"I know your extraordinary secret, just as I knew Jean Valjean's name, just as I know your name."

"My name?"

"Yes."

"That is not difficult, Monsieur le Baron. I had the honor to write to you and to tell it to you. Thénard."

"— Dier."

"Hey?"

"Thénardier."

"Who's that?"

In danger the porcupine bristles up, the beetle feigns death, the old guard forms in a square; this man burst into laughter.

Then he flicked a grain of dust from the sleeve of his coat with a fillip.

Marius continued :

"You are also Jondrette the workman, Fabantou the comedian, Genflot the poet, Don Alvarès the Spaniard, and Mistress Balizard."

"Mistress what?"

"And you kept a pot-house at Montfermeil."

"A pot-house! Never."

"And I tell you that your name is Thénardier."

"I deny it."

"And that you are a rascal. Here."

And Marius drew a bank-note from his pocket and flung it in his face.

"Thanks! Pardon me! five hundred francs! Monsieur le Baron!"

And the man, overcome, bowed, seized the note and examined it.

"Five hundred francs!" he began again, taken aback. And he stammered in a low voice: "An honest rustler."¹

Then brusquely:

"Well, so be it!" he exclaimed. "Let us put ourselves at our ease."

And with the agility of a monkey, flinging back his hair, tearing off his spectacles, and withdrawing from his nose by sleight of hand the two quills of which mention was recently made, and which the reader has also met with on another page of this book, he took off his face as a man takes off his hat.

His eye lighted up; his uneven brow, with hollows in some places and bumps in others, hideously wrinkled at the top, was laid bare, his nose had become as sharp as a beak; the fierce and sagacious profile of the man of prey re-appeared.

"Monsieur le Baron is infallible," he said in a clear voice whence all nasal twang had disappeared, "I am Thénardier."

And he straightened up his crooked back.

Thénardier, for it was really he, was strangely surprised; he would have been troubled, had he been capable of such a thing. He had come to bring astonishment, and it was he who had received it. This humiliation had been worth five hundred francs to him, and, taking it all in all, he accepted it; but he was none the less bewildered.

¹ *Un fafiot sérieux.* *Fafiot* is the slang term for a bank-bill, derived from its rustling noise.

He beheld this Baron Pontmercy for the first time, and, in spite of his disguise, this Baron Pontmercy recognized him, and recognized him thoroughly. And not only was this Baron perfectly informed as to Thénardier, but he seemed well posted as to Jean Valjean. Who was this almost beardless young man, who was so glacial and so generous, who knew people's names, who knew all their names, and who opened his purse to them, who bullied rascals like a judge, and who paid them like a dupe?

Thénardier, the reader will remember, although he had been Marius' neighbor, had never seen him, which is not unusual in Paris; he had formerly, in a vague way, heard his daughters talk of a very poor young man named Marius who lived in the house. He had written to him, without knowing him, the letter with which the reader is acquainted.

No connection between that Marius and M. le Baron Pontmercy was possible in his mind.

As for the name Pontmercy, it will be recalled that, on the battle field of Waterloo, he had heard only the last two syllables, for which he always entertained the legitimate scorn which one owes to what is merely an expression of thanks.

However, through his daughter Azelma, who had started on the scent of the married pair on the 16th of February, and through his own personal researches, he had succeeded in learning many things, and, from the depths of his own gloom, he had contrived to grasp more than one mysterious clew. He had discovered, by dint of industry, or, at least, by dint of induction, he had guessed, who the man was whom he had encountered on a certain day in the Grand Sewer. From the man he had easily reached the name. He knew that Madame la Baronne Pontmercy was Cosette. But he meant to be discreet in that quarter.

Who was Cosette? He did not know exactly himself. He did indeed, catch an inkling of illegitimacy, the history of Fantine had always seemed to him equivocal; but what was the use of talking about that? in order to cause himself to be paid for his silence? He had, or thought he had, better wares than that for sale. And, according to all appearances, if he were to come and make to the Baron Pontmercy this revelation—and without proof: "Your wife is a bastard," the only result would be to attract the boot of the husband towards the loins of the revealer.

From Thénardier's point of view, the conversation with Marius had not yet begun. He ought to have drawn back, to

have modified his strategy, to have abandoned his position, to have changed his front; but nothing essential had been compromised as yet, and he had five hundred francs in his pocket. Moreover, he had something decisive to say, and, even against this very well-informed and well-armed Baron Pontmercy, he felt himself strong. For men of Thénardier's nature, every dialogue is a combat. In the one in which he was about to engage, what was his situation? He did not know to whom he was speaking, but he did know of what he was speaking, he made this rapid review of his inner forces, and after having said: "I am Thénardier," he waited.

Marius had become thoughtful. So he had hold of Thénardier at last. That man whom he had so greatly desired to find, was before him. He could honor Colonel Pontmercy's recommendation.

He felt humiliated that that hero should have owed anything to this villain, and that the letter of change drawn from the depths of the tomb by his father upon him, Marius, had been protested up to that day. It also seemed to him, in the complex state of his mind towards Thénardier, that there was occasion to avenge the Colonel for the misfortune of having been saved by such a rascal. In any case, he was content. He was about to deliver the Colonel's shade from this unworthy creditor at last, and it seemed to him that he was on the point of rescuing his father's memory from the debtors' prison. By the side of this duty there was another—to elucidate, if possible, the source of Cosette's fortune. The opportunity appeared to present itself. Perhaps Thénardier knew something. It might prove useful to see the bottom of this man.

He commenced with this.

Thénardier had caused the "honest rustler" to disappear in his fob, and was gazing at Marius with a gentleness that was almost tender.

Marius broke the silence.

"Thénardier, I have told you your name. Now, would you like to have me tell you your secret—the one that you came here to reveal to me? I have information of my own, also. You shall see that I know more about it than you do. Jean Valjean, as you have said, is an assassin and a thief. A thief, because he robbed a wealthy manufacturer, whose ruin he brought about. An assassin, because he assassinated police-agent Javert."

"I don't understand, sir," ejaculated Thénardier.

"I will make myself intelligible. In a certain arrondissement of the Pas de Calais, there was, in 1822, a man who had fallen out with justice, and who, under the name of M. Madeleine, had regained his status and rehabilitated himself. This man had become a just man in the full force of the term. In a trade, the manufacture of black glass goods, he made the fortune of an entire city. As far as his personal fortune was concerned he made that also, but as a secondary matter, and in some sort, by accident. He was the foster-father of the poor. He founded hospitals, opened schools, visited the sick, dowered young girls, supported widows, and adopted orphans; he was like the guardian angel of the country. He refused the cross, he was appointed Mayor. A liberated convict knew the secret of a penalty incurred by this man in former days; he denounced him, and had him arrested, and profited by the arrest to come to Paris and cause the banker Laffitte,—I have the fact from the cashier himself,—by means of a false signature, to hand over to him the sum of over half a million which belonged to M. Madeleine. This convict who robbed M. Madeleine, was Jean Valjean. As for the other fact, you have nothing to tell me about it either. Jean Valjean killed the agent Javert; he shot him with a pistol. I, the person who is speaking to you, was present."

Thénardier cast upon Marius the sovereign glance of a conquered man who lays his hand once more upon the victory, and who has just regained, in one instant, all the ground which he has lost. But the smile returned instantly. The inferior's triumph in the presence of his superior must be wheedling.

Thénardier contented himself with saying to Marius:

"Monsieur le Baron, we are on the wrong track."

And he emphasized this phrase by making his bunch of seals execute an expressive whirl.

"What!" broke forth Marius, "do you dispute that? These are facts."

"They are chimæras. The confidence with which Monsieur le Baron honors me renders it my duty to tell him so. Truth and justice before all things. I do not like to see folks accused unjustly. Monsieur le Baron, Jean Valjean did not rob M. Madeleine and Jean Valjean did not kill Javert."

"This is too much! How is this?"

"For two reasons."

"What are they? Speak."

"This is the first: he did not rob M. Madeleine, because it is Jean Valjean himself who was M. Madeleine."

"What tale are you telling me?"

"And this is the second: he did not assassinate Javert, because the person who killed Javert was Javert."

"What do you mean to say?"

"That Javert committed suicide."

"Prove it! prove it!" cried Marius beside himself.

Thénardier resumed, scanning his phrase after the manner of the ancient Alexandrine measure:

"Police-agent-Ja-vert-was-found-drowned-un-der-a-boat-of-the-Pont-au-Change."

"But prove it!"

Thénardier drew from his pocket a large envelope of gray paper, which seemed to contain sheets folded in different sizes.

"I have my papers," he said calmly.

And he added:

"Monsieur le Baron, in your interests I desired to know Jean Valjean thoroughly. I say that Jean Valjean and M. Madeleine are one and the same man, and I say that Javert had no other assassin than Javert. If I speak, it is because I have proofs. Not manuscript proofs — writing is suspicious, hand-writing is complaisant, — but printed proofs."

As he spoke, Thénardier extracted from the envelope two copies of newspapers, yellow, faded, and strongly saturated with tobacco. One of these two newspapers, broken at every fold and falling into rags, seemed much older than the other.

"Two facts, two proofs," remarked Thénardier. And he offered the two newspapers, unfolded, to Marius.

The reader is acquainted with these two papers. One, the most ancient, a number of the *Drapeau Blanc* of the 25th of July, 1823, the text of which can be seen in the first volume, established the identity of M. Madeleine and Jean Valjean.

The other, a *Moniteur* of the 15th of June, 1832, announced the suicide of Javert, adding that it appeared from a verbal report of Javert to the prefect that, having been taken prisoner in the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, he had owed his life to the magnanimity of an insurgent who, holding him under his pistol, had fired into the air, instead of blowing out his brains.

Marius read. He had evidence, a certain date, irrefragable proof, these two newspapers had not been printed expressly

for the purpose of backing up Thénardier's statements; the note printed in the *Moniteur* had been an administrative communication from the Prefecture of Police. Marius could not doubt.

The information of the cashier-clerk had been false, and he himself had been deceived.

Jean Valjean, who had suddenly grown grand, emerged from his cloud. Marius could not repress a cry of joy.

"Well, then this unhappy wretch is an admirable man! the whole of that fortune really belonged to him! he is Madeleine, the providence of a whole countryside! he is Jean Valjean, Javert's savior! he is a hero! he is a saint!"

"He's not a saint, and he's not a hero!" said Thénardier. "He's an assassin and a robber."

And he added, in the tone of a man who begins to feel that he possesses some authority:

"Let us be calm."

Robber, assassin — those words which Marius thought had disappeared and which returned, fell upon him like an ice-cold shower-bath.

"Again!" said he.

"Always," ejaculated Thénardier. "Jean Valjean did not rob Madeleine, but he is a thief. He did not kill Javert, but he is a murderer."

"Will you speak," retorted Marius, "of that miserable theft, committed forty years ago, and expiated, as your own newspapers prove, by a whole life of repentance, of self-abnegation and of virtue?"

"I say assassination and theft, Monsieur le Baron, and I repeat that I am speaking of actual facts. What I have to reveal to you is absolutely unknown. It belongs to unpublished matter. And perhaps you will find in it the source of the fortune so skilfully presented to Madame la Baronne by Jean Valjean. I say skilfully, because, by a gift of that nature it would not be so very unskilful to slip into an honorable house whose comforts one would then share, and, at the same stroke, to conceal one's crime, and to enjoy one's theft, to bury one's name and to create for oneself a family."

"I might interrupt you at this point," said Marius, "but go on."

"Monsieur le Baron, I will tell you all, leaving the recompense to your generosity. This secret is worth massive gold. You will say to me: 'Why do not you apply to Jean Val-

jean ?' For a very simple reason ; I know that he has stripped himself, and stripped himself in your favor, and I consider the combination ingenious ; but he has no longer a sou, he would show me his empty hands, and, since I am in need of some money for my trip to la Joya, I prefer you, you who have it all, to him who has nothing. I am a little fatigued, permit me to take a chair."

Marius seated himself and motioned to him to do the same.

Thénardier installed himself on a tufted chair, picked up his two newspapers, thrust them back into their envelope, and murmured as he pecked at the *Drapeau Blanc* with his nail : "It cost me a good deal of trouble to get this one."

That done he crossed his legs and stretched himself out on the back of the chair, an attitude characteristic of people who are sure of what they are saying, then he entered upon his subject gravely, emphasizing his words :

"Monsieur le Baron, on the 6th of June, 1832, about a year ago, on the day of the insurrection, a man was in the Grand Sewer of Paris, at the point where the sewer enters the Seine, between the Pont des Invalides and the Pont de Jéna."

Marius abruptly drew his chair closer to that of Thénardier. Thénardier noticed this movement and continued with the deliberation of an orator who holds his interlocutor and who feels his adversary palpitating under his words :

"This man, forced to conceal himself, and for reasons, moreover, which are foreign to politics, had adopted the sewer as his domicile and had a key to it. It was, I repeat, on the 6th of June ; it might have been eight o'clock in the evening. The man hears a noise in the sewer. Greatly surprised, he hides himself and lies in wait. It was the sound of footsteps, some one was walking in the dark, and coming in his direction. Strange to say, there was another man in the sewer besides himself. The grating of the outlet from the sewer was not far off. A little light which fell through it permitted him to recognize the newcomer, and to see that the man was carrying something on his back. He was walking in a bent attitude. The man who was walking in a bent attitude was an ex-convict, and what he was dragging on his shoulders was a corpse. Assassination caught in the very act, if ever there was such a thing. As for the theft, that is understood ; one does not kill a man gratis. This convict was on his way to fling the body into the river. One fact is to be noticed, that before reaching the exit grating, this con-

vict, who had come a long distance in the sewer, must, necessarily, have encountered a frightful quagmire where it seems as though he might have left the body, but the sewer-men would have found the assassinated man the very next day, while at work on the quagmire, and that did not suit the assassin's plans. He had preferred to traverse that quagmire with his burden, and his exertions must have been terrible, for it is impossible to risk one's life more completely; I don't understand how he could have come out of that alive."

Marius' chair approached still nearer. Thénardier took advantage of this to draw a long breath. He went on:

"Monsieur le Baron, a sewer is not the Champ de Mars. One lacks everything there, even room. When two men are there, they must meet. That is what happened. The man domiciled there and the passer-by were forced to bid each other good-day, greatly to the regret of both. The passer-by said to the inhabitant: — "You see what I have on my back, I must get out, you have the key, give it to me." That convict was a man of terrible strength. There was no way of refusing. Nevertheless, the man who had the key parleyed, simply to gain time. He examined the dead man, but he could see nothing, except that the latter was young, well dressed, with the air of being rich, and all disfigured with blood. While talking, the man contrived to tear and pull off behind, without the assassin perceiving it, a bit of the assassinated man's coat. A document for conviction, you understand; a means of recovering the trace of things and of bringing home the crime to the criminal. He put this document for conviction in his pocket. After which he opened the grating, made the man go out with his embarrassment on his back, closed the grating again, and ran off, not caring to be mixed up with the remainder of the adventure and above all, not wishing to be present when the assassin threw the assassinated man into the river. Now you comprehend. The man who was carrying the corpse was Jean Valjean; the one who had the key is speaking to you at this moment; and the piece of the coat . . ."

Thénardier completed his phrase by drawing from his pocket, and holding, on a level with his eyes, nipped between his two thumbs and his two forefingers, a strip of torn black cloth, all covered with dark spots.

Marius had sprung to his feet, pale, hardly able to draw his breath, with his eyes riveted on the fragment of black cloth, and, without uttering a word, without taking his eyes from that fragment, he retreated to the wall and fumbled with his

right hand along the wall for a key which was in the lock of a cupboard near the chimney.

He found the key, opened the cupboard, plunged his arm into it without looking, and without his frightened gaze quitting the rag which Thénardier still held outspread.

But Thénardier continued:

"Monsieur le Baron, I have the strongest of reasons for believing that the assassinated young man was an opulent stranger lured into a trap by Jean Valjean, and the bearer of an enormous sum of money."

"The young man was myself, and here is the coat!" cried Marius, and he flung upon the floor an old black coat all covered with blood.

Then, snatching the fragment from the hands of Thénardier, he crouched down over the coat, and laid the torn morsel against the tattered skirt. The rent fitted exactly, and the strip completed the coat.

Thénardier was petrified.

This is what he thought: "I'm struck all of a heap."

Marius rose to his feet trembling, despairing, radiant.

He fumbled in his pocket and stalked furiously to Thénardier, presenting to him and almost thrusting in his face his fist filled with bank-notes for five hundred and a thousand francs.

"You are an infamous wretch! you are a liar, a calumniator, a villain. You came to accuse that man, you have only justified him; you wanted to ruin him, you have only succeeded in glorifying him. And it is you who are the thief! And it is you who are the assassin! I saw you, Thénardier Jondrette, in that lair on the Rue de l'Hôpital. I know enough about you to send you to the galleys and even further if I choose. Here are a thousand francs, bully that you are!"

And he flung a thousand franc note at Thénardier.

"Ah! Jondrette Thénardier, vile rascal! Let this serve you as a lesson, you dealer in second-hand secrets, merchant of mysteries, rummager of the shadows, wretch! Take these five hundred francs and get out of here! Waterloo protects you."

"Waterloo!" growled Thénardier, pocketing the five hundred francs along with the thousand.

"Yes, assassin! You there saved the life of a Colonel . . ."

"Of a General," said Thénardier, elevating his head.

"Of a Colonel!" repeated Marius in a rage. "I wouldn't give a ha'penny for a general. And you come here to commit infamies! I tell you that you have committed all crimes.

Go! disappear! Only be happy, that is all that I desire. Ah! monster! here are three thousand francs more. Take them. You will depart to-morrow, for America, with your daughter; for your wife is dead, you abominable liar. I shall watch over your departure, you ruffian, and at that moment I will count out to you twenty thousand francs. Go get yourself hung elsewhere!"

"Monsieur le Baron," replied Thénardier, bowing to the very earth, "eternal gratitude." And Thénardier left the room, understanding nothing, stupefied and delighted with this sweet crushing beneath sacks of gold, and with that thunder which had burst forth over his head in bank-bills.

Struck by lightning he was, but he was also content; and he would have been greatly angered had he had a lightning rod to ward off such lightning as that.

Let us finish with this man at once.

Two days after the events which we are at this moment narrating, he set out, thanks to Marius' care, for America under a false name, with his daughter Azelma, furnished with a draft on New York for twenty thousand francs.

The moral wretchedness of Thénardier, the bourgeois who had missed his vocation, was irremediable. He was in America what he had been in Europe. Contact with an evil man sometimes suffices to corrupt a good action and to cause evil things to spring from it. With Marius' money, Thénardier set up as a slave-dealer.

As soon as Thénardier had left the house, Marius rushed to the garden, where Cosette was still walking.

"Cosette! Cosette!" he cried. "Come! come quick! Let us go. Basque, a carriage! Cosette, come. Ah! My God! It was he who saved my life! Let us not lose a minute! Put on your shawl."

Cosette thought him mad and obeyed.

He could not breathe, he laid his hand on his heart to restrain its throbbing. He paced back and forth with huge strides, he embraced Cosette:

"Ah! Cosette! I am an unhappy wretch!" said he.

Marius was bewildered. He began to catch a glimpse in Jean Valjean of some indescribably lofty and melancholy figure. An unheard-of virtue supreme and sweet, humble in its immensity, appeared to him. The convict was transfigured into Christ.

Marius was dazzled by this prodigy. He did not know precisely what he beheld, but it was grand.

In an instant, a hackney-carriage stood in front of the door. Marius helped Cosette in and darted in himself.

"Driver," said he, "Rue de l'Homme Armé, Number 7."

The carriage drove off.

"Ah! what happiness!" ejaculated Cosette. "Rue de l'Homme Armé, I did not dare to speak to you of that. We are going to see M. Jean."

"Thy father! Cosette, thy father more than ever. Cosette, I guess it. You told me that you had never received the letter that I sent you by Gavroche. It must have fallen into his hands. Cosette, he went to the barricade to save me. As it is a necessity with him to be an angel, he saved others also; he saved Javert. He rescued me from that gulf to give me to you. He carried me on his back through that frightful sewer. Ah! I am a monster of ingratitude. Cosette, after having been your providence, he became mine. Just imagine, there was a terrible quagmire enough to drown one a hundred times over, to drown one in mire. Cosette! he made me traverse it. I was unconscious; I saw nothing, I heard nothing, I could know nothing of my own adventure. We are going to bring him back, to take him with us, whether he is willing or not, he shall never leave us again. If only he is at home! Provided only that we can find him, I will pass the rest of my life in venerating him. Yes, that is how it should be, do you see, Cosette? Gavroche must have delivered my letter to him. All is explained. You understand."

Cosette did not understand a word.

"You are right," she said to him.

Meanwhile the carriage rolled on.

V. — A NIGHT BEHIND WHICH THERE IS DAY.

JEAN VALJEAN turned round at the knock which he heard on his door.

"Come in," he said feebly.

The door opened.

Cosette and Marius made their appearance.

Cosette rushed into the room.

Marius remained on the threshold, leaning against the jamb of the door.

"Cosette!" said Jean Valjean.

And he sat erect in his chair, his arms outstretched and

trembling, haggard, livid, gloomy, an immense joy in his eyes.

Cosette, stifling with emotion, fell upon Jean Valjean's breast.

"Father!" said she.

Jean Valjean, overcome, stammered :

"Cosette! she! you! Madame! it is thou! Ah! my God!"

And, pressed close in Cosette's arms he exclaimed :

"It is thou! thou art here! Thou dost pardon me then!"

Marius, lowering his eyelids, in order to keep his tears from flowing, took a step forward and murmured between lips convulsively contracted to repress his sobs :

"My father!"

"And you also, you pardon me!" Jean Valjean said to him.

Marius could find no words, and Jean Valjean added :

"Thanks."

Cosette tore off her shawl and tossed her hat on the bed.

"It embarrasses me," said she.

And, seating herself on the old man's knees, she put aside his white locks with an adorable movement, and kissed his brow.

Jean Valjean, bewildered, let her have her own way.

Cosette who only understood in a very confused manner, redoubled her caresses, as though she desired to pay Marius' debt.

Jean Valjean stammered :

"How stupid people are! I thought that I should never see her again. Imagine, Monsieur Pontmercy, at the very moment when you entered, I was saying to myself: 'All is over. Here is her little gown, I am a miserable man, I shall never see Cosette again,' and I was saying that at the very moment when you were mounting the stairs. Was not I an idiot! Just see how idiotic one can be! One reckons without the good God. The good God says :

"'You fancy that you are about to be abandoned, stupid! No. No, things will not go so. Come, there is a good man yonder who is in need of an angel.' And the angel comes, and one sees one's Cosette again! and one sees one's little Cosette once more! Ah! I was very unhappy."

For a moment he could not speak, then he went on :

"I really needed to see Cosette a little bit now and then. A heart needs a bone to gnaw. But I was perfectly conscious that I was in the way. I gave myself reasons: 'They do not want you, keep in your own course, one has not the right to cling eternally.' Ah! God be praised, I see her

once more! Dost thou know, Cosette, thy husband is very handsome? Ah! what a pretty embroidered collar thou hast on, luckily. I am fond of that pattern. It was thy husband who chose it, was it not? And then, thou shouldst have some cashmere shawls. Let me call her thou, Monsieur Pontmercy. It will not be for long."

And Cosette began again:

"How wicked of you to have left us like that! Where did you go? Why have you stayed away so long? Formerly your journeys only lasted three or four days. I sent Nicolette, the answer always was: 'He is absent.' How long have you been back? Why did you not let us know? Do you know that you are very much changed? Ah! what a naughty father! he has been ill, and we have not known it! Stay, Marius, feel how cold his hand is!"

"So you are here! Monsieur Pontmercy, you pardon me!" repeated Jean Valjean.

At that word which Jean Valjean had just uttered once more, all that was swelling Marius' heart found vent.

He burst forth:

"Cosette, do you hear? he has come to that! he asks my forgiveness! And do you know what he has done for me, Cosette? He has saved my life. He has done more—he has given you to me. And after having saved me, and after having given you to me, Cosette, what has he done with himself? He has sacrificed himself. Behold the man. And he says to me the ingrate, to me the forgetful, to me the pitiless, to me the guilty one: Thanks! Cosette, my whole life passed at the feet of this man would be too little. That barricade, that sewer, that furnace, that cess-pool,—all that he traversed for me, for thee, Cosette! He carried me away through all the deaths which he put aside before me, and accepted for himself. Every courage, every virtue, every heroism every sanctity he possesses! Cosette, that man is an angel!"

"Hush! hush!" said Jean Valjean in a low voice. "Why tell all that?"

"But you!" cried Marius with a wrath in which there was veneration, "why did you not tell it to me? It is your own fault, too. You save people's lives, and you conceal it from them! You do more, under the pretext of unmasking yourself, you calumniate yourself. It is frightful."

"I told the truth," replied Jean Valjean.

"No," retorted Marius, "the truth is the whole truth; and

that you did not tell. You were Monsieur Madeleine, why not have said so? You saved Javert, why not have said so? I owed my life to you, why not have said so?"

"Because I thought as you do. I thought that you were in the right. It was necessary that I should go away. If you had known about that affair of the sewer, you would have made me remain near you. I was therefore forced to hold my peace. If I had spoken, it would have caused embarrassment in every way."

"It would have embarrassed what? embarrassed whom?" retorted Marius. "Do you think that you are going to stay here. We shall carry you off. Ah! good heavens! when I reflect that it was by an accident that I have learned all this. You form a part of ourselves. You are her father, and mine. You shall not pass another day in this dreadful house. Do not imagine that you will be here tomorrow."

"Tomorrow," said Jean Valjean, "I shall not be here, but I shall not be with you."

"What do you mean?" replied Marius. "Ah come now, we are not going to permit any more journeys. You shall never leave us again. You belong to us. We shall not loose our hold of you."

"This time it is for good," added Cosette. "We have a carriage at the door. I shall run away with you. If necessary, I shall employ force."

And she laughingly made a movement to lift the old man in her arms.

"Your chamber still stands ready in our house," she went on. "If you only knew how pretty the garden is now! The azaleas are doing very well there. The walks are sanded with river sand; there are tiny violet shells. You shall eat my strawberries. I water them myself. And no more 'madame, no more 'Monsieur Jean,' we are living under a Republic, everybody says *thou*, don't they, Marius? The programme is changed. If you only knew, father, I have had a sorrow, there was a robin red-breast which had made her nest in a hole in the wall, and a horrible cat ate her. My poor, pretty, little robin red-breast which used to put her head out of her window and look at me! I cried over it. I should have liked to kill the cat! But now nobody cries any more. Everybody laughs, everybody is happy. You are going to come with us. How delighted grandfather will be! You shall have your plot in the garden, you shall cultivate it, and we shall see whether your strawberries are as fine as mine. And, then, I

shall do everything that you wish, and then, you will obey me prettily."

Jean Valjean listened to her without hearing her. He heard the music of her voice rather than the sense of her words; one of those large tears which are the sombre pearls of the soul, welled up slowly in his eyes.

He murmured:

"The proof that God is good is that she is here."

"Father!" said Cosette.

Jean Valjean continued:

"It is quite true that it would be charming for us to live together. Their trees are full of birds. I would walk with Cosette. It is sweet to be among living people who bid each other 'good-day,' who call to each other in the garden. People see each other from early morning. We should each cultivate our own little corner. She would make me eat her strawberries. I would make her gather my roses. That would be charming. Only . . ."

He paused and said gently:

"It is a pity."

The tear did not fall, it retreated, and Jean Valjean replaced it with a smile.

Cosette took both the old man's hands in hers.

"My God!" said she, "your hands are still colder than before. Are you ill? Do you suffer?"

"I? No," replied Jean Valjean, "I am very well. Only . . ."

He paused.

"Only what?"

"I am going to die presently."

Cosette and Marius shuddered.

"To die!" exclaimed Marius.

"Yes, but that is nothing," said Jean Valjean.

He took breath, smiled and resumed:

"Cosette, thou wert talking to me, go on, so thy little robin red-breast is dead? Speak, so that I may hear thy voice."

Marius gazed at the old man in amazement.

Cosette uttered a heartrending cry.

"Father! my father! you will live. You are going to live. I insist upon your living, do you hear?"

Jean Valjean raised his head towards her with adoration.

"Oh! yes, forbid me to die. Who knows? Perhaps I shall obey. I was on the verge of dying when you came. That stopped me, it seemed to me that I was born again."

"You are full of strength and life," cried Marius. "Do you imagine that a person can die like this? You have had sorrow, you shall have no more. It is I who ask your forgiveness, and on my knees! You are going to live, and to live with us, and to live a long time. We take possession of you once more. There are two of us here who will henceforth have no other thought than your happiness."

"You see," resumed Cosette all bathed in tears, "that Marius says that you shall not die."

Jean Valjean continued to smile.

"Even if you were to take possession of me, Monsieur Pontmercy, would that make me other than I am? No, God has thought like you and myself, and he does not change his mind; it is useful for me to go. Death is a good arrangement. God knows better than we what we need. May you be happy, may Monsieur Pontmercy have Cosette, may youth wed the morning, may there be around you, my children, lilacs and nightingales; may your life be a beautiful, sunny lawn, may all the enchantments of heaven fill your souls, and now let me, who am good for nothing, die; it is certain that all this is right. Come, be reasonable, nothing is possible now, I am fully conscious that all is over. And then, last night, I drank that whole jug of water. How good thy husband is, Cosette! Thou art much better off with him than with me."

A noise became audible at the door.

It was the doctor entering.

"Good-day, and farewell, doctor," said Jean Valjean. "Here are my poor children."

Marius stepped up to the doctor. He addressed to him only this single word: "Monsieur? . . ." But his manner of pronouncing it contained a complete question.

The doctor replied to the question by an expressive glance.

"Because things are not agreeable," said Jean Valjean, "that is no reason for being unjust towards God."

A silence ensued.

All breasts were oppressed.

Jean Valjean turned to Cosette. He began to gaze at her as though he wished to retain her features for eternity.

In the depths of the shadow into which he had already descended, ecstasy was still possible to him when gazing at Cosette. The reflection of that sweet face lighted up his pale visage.

The doctor felt of his pulse.

"Ah! it was you that he wanted!" he murmured, looking at Cosette and Marius.

And bending down to Marius' ear, he added in a very low voice :

"Too late."

Jean Valjean surveyed the doctor and Marius serenely, almost without ceasing to gaze at Cosette.

These barely articulate words were heard to issue from his mouth :

"It is nothing to die; it is dreadful not to live."

All at once he rose to his feet. These accesses of strength are sometimes the sign of the death agony. He walked with a firm step to the wall, thrusting aside Marius and the doctor who tried to help him, detached from the wall a little copper crucifix which was suspended there, and returned to his seat with all the freedom of movement of perfect health, and said in a loud voice, as he laid the crucifix on the table :

"Behold the great martyr."

Then his chest sank in, his head wavered, as though the intoxication of the tomb were seizing hold upon him.

His hands, which rested on his knees, began to press their nails into the stuff of his trowsers.

Cosette supported his shoulders, and sobbed, and tried to speak to him, but could not.

Among the words mingled with that mournful saliva which accompanies tears, they distinguished words like the following :

"Father, do not leave us. Is it possible that we have found you only to lose you again?"

It might be said that agony writhes. It goes, comes, advances towards the sepulchre, and returns towards life. There is groping in the action of dying.

Jean Valjean rallied after this semi-swoon, shook his brow as though to make the shadows fall away from it and became almost perfectly lucid once more.

He took a fold of Cosette's sleeve and kissed it.

"He is coming back! doctor, he is coming back," cried Marius.

"You are good, both of you," said Jean Valjean. "I am going to tell you what has caused me pain. What has pained me, Monsieur Pontmercy, is that you have not been willing to touch that money. That money really belongs to your wife. I will explain to you, my children, and for that reason also, I am glad to see you. Black jet comes from England, white jet comes from Norway. All this is in this paper, which you will read. For bracelets, I invented a way of substituting for slides of soldered sheet iron, slides of iron laid

together. It is prettier, better and less costly. You will understand how much money can be made in that way. So Cosette's fortune is really hers. I give you these details, in order that your mind may be set at rest."

The portress had come upstairs and was gazing in at the half-open door. The doctor dismissed her.

But he could not prevent this zealous woman from exclaiming to the dying man before she disappeared: "Would you like a priest?"

"I have had one," replied Jean Valjean.

And, with his finger he seemed to indicate a point above his head where one would have said that he saw some one.

It is probable, in fact, that the Bishop was present at this death agony.

Cosette gently slipped a pillow under his loins.

Jean Valjean resumed:

"Have no fear, Monsieur Pontmercy, I adjure you. The six hundred thousand francs really belong to Cosette. My life will have been wasted if you do not enjoy them! We managed to do very well with those glass goods. We rivalled what is called Berlin jewellery. However, we could not equal the black glass of England. A gross, which contains twelve hundred very well cut grains, only costs three francs."

When a being who is dear to us is on the point of death, we gaze upon him with a look which clings convulsively to him and which would fain hold him back.

Cosette gave her hand to Marius, and both, mute with anguish, not knowing what to say to the dying man, stood trembling and despairing before him.

Jean Valjean sank moment by moment. He was failing; he was drawing near to the gloomy horizon.

His breath had become intermittent; a little rattling interrupted it. He found some difficulty in moving his forearm, his feet had lost all movement, and in proportion as the wretchedness of limb and feebleness of body increased, all the majesty of his soul was displayed and spread over his brow. The light of the unknown world was already visible in his eyes.

His face paled and smiled. Life was no longer there, it was something else.

His breath sank, his glance grew grander. He was a corpse on which the wings could be felt.

He made a sign to Cosette to draw near, then to Marius; the last minute of the last hour had, evidently, arrived.

He began to speak to them in a voice so feeble that it seemed to come from a distance, and one would have said that a wall now rose between them and him.

"Draw near, draw near both of you. I love you dearly. Oh! how good it is to die like this! And thou lovest me also, my Cosette. I knew well that thou still felt friendly towards thy poor old man. How kind it was of thee to place that pillow under my loins! Thou wilt weep for me a little, wilt thou not? Not too much. I do not wish thee to have any real griefs. You must enjoy yourselves a great deal, my children. I forgot to tell you, that the profit was greater still on the buckles without tongues than on all the rest. A gross of a dozen dozens cost ten francs and sold for sixty. It really was a good business. So there is no occasion for surprise at the six hundred thousand francs, Monsieur Pontmercy. It is honest money. You may be rich with a tranquil mind. Thou must have a carriage, a box at the theatres now and then, and handsome ball dresses, my Cosette, and then, thou must give good dinners to thy friends, and be very happy. I was writing to Cosette a while ago. She will find my letter. I bequeath to her the two candlesticks which stand on the chimney-piece. They are of silver, but to me they are gold, they are diamonds; they change candles which are placed in them into wax-tapers. I do not know whether the person who gave them to me is pleased with me yonder on high. I have done what I could. My children, you will not forget that I am a poor man, you will have me buried in the first plot of earth that you find, under a stone to mark the spot. This is my wish. No name on the stone. If Cosette cares to come for a little while now and then, it will give me pleasure. And you too, Monsieur Pontmercy. I must admit that I have not always loved you. I ask your pardon for that. Now she and you form but one for me. I feel very grateful to you. I am sure that you make Cosette happy. If you only knew, Monsieur Pontmercy, her pretty rosy cheeks were my delight; when I saw her in the least pale, I was sad. In the chest of drawers, there is a bank-bill for five hundred francs. I have not touched it. It is for the poor. Cosette, dost thou see thy little gown yonder on the bed? dost thou recognize it? That was ten years ago, however. How time flies! We have been very happy. All is over. Do not weep, my children, I am not going very far, I shall see you from there, you will only have to look at night, and you will see me smile. Cosette, dost thou remember Montfermeil? Thou wert in the forest, thou

wert greatly terrified; dost thou remember how I took hold of the handle of the water-bucket? That was the first time that I touched thy poor, little hand. It was so cold! Ah! your hands were red then, mademoiselle, they are very white now. And the big doll! dost thou remember? Thou didst call her Catherine. Thou regrettedest not having taken her to the convent! How thou didst make me laugh sometimes, my sweet angel! When it had been raining, thou didst float bits of straw on the gutters, and watch them pass away. One day I gave thee a willow battledore and a shuttlecock with yellow, blue and green feathers. Thou hast forgotten it. Thou wert roguish so young! Thou didst play. Thou didst put cherries in thy ears. Those are things of the past. The forests through which one has passed with one's child, the trees under which one has strolled, the convents where one has concealed oneself, the games, the hearty laughs of childhood, are shadows. I imagined that all that belonged to me. In that lay my stupidity. Those Thénardiens were wicked. Thou must forgive them. Cosette, the moment has come to tell thee the name of thy mother. She was called Fantine. Remember that name--Fantine. Kneel whenever thou utterest it. She suffered much. She loved thee dearly. She had as much unhappiness as thou hast had happiness. That is the way God apportions things. He is there on high, he sees us all, and he knows what he does in the midst of his great stars. I am on the verge of departure, my children. Love each other well and always. There is nothing else but that in the world: love for each other. You will think sometimes of the poor old man who died here. Oh my Cosette, it is not my fault, indeed, that I have not seen thee all this time, it cut me to the heart; I went as far as the corner of the street, I must have produced a queer effect on the people who saw me pass, I was like a madman, I once went out without my hat. I no longer see clearly, my children, I had still other things to say, but never mind. Think a little of me. Come still nearer. I die happy. Give me your dear and well-beloved heads, so that I may lay my hands upon them."

Cosette and Marius fell on their knees, in despair, suffocating with tears, each beneath one of Jean Valjean's hands. Those august hands no longer moved.

He had fallen backwards, the light of the candles illuminated him.

His white face looked up to heaven, he allowed Cosette and Marius to cover his hands with kisses.

He was dead.

The night was starless and extremely dark. No doubt, in the gloom, some immense angel stood erect with wings outspread, awaiting that soul.

VI. — THE GRASS COVERS AND THE RAIN EFFACES.

IN the cemetery of Père-Lachaise, in the vicinity of the common grave, far from the elegant quarter of that city of sepulchres, far from all the tombs of fancy which display in the presence of eternity all the hideous fashions of death, in a deserted corner, beside an old wall, beneath a great yew tree over which climbs the wild convolvulus, amid dandelions and mosses, there lies a stone. That stone is no more exempt than others from the leprosy of time, of dampness, of the lichens and from the defilement of the birds. The water turns it green, the air blackens it. It is not near any path, and people are not fond of walking in that direction, because the grass is high and their feet are immediately wet. When there is a little sunshine, the lizards come thither. All around there is a quivering of weeds. In the spring, linnets warble in the trees.

This stone is perfectly plain. In cutting it the only thought was the requirements of the tomb, and no other care was taken than to make the stone long enough and narrow enough to cover a man.

No name is to be read there.

Only, many years ago, a hand wrote upon it in pencil these four lines, which have become gradually illegible beneath the rain and the dust, and which are, to-day, probably effaced:

Il dort. Quoique le sort fût pour lui bien étrange,
Il vivait. Il mourut quand il n'eut plus son ange.
La chose simplement d'elle-même arriva,
Comme la nuit se fait lorsque le jour s'en va.¹

¹ He sleeps. Although his fate was very strange, he lived. He died when he had no longer his angel. The thing came to pass simply, of itself, as the night comes when day is gone.

LETTER TO M. DAELLI.

Publisher of the Italian translation of *Les Misérables* in Milan.

HAUTEVILLE-HOUSE, October 18, 1862.

You are right, sir, when you tell me that *Les Misérables* is written for all nations. I do not know whether it will be read by all, but I wrote it for all. It is addressed to England as well as to Spain, to Italy as well as to France, to Germany as well as to Ireland, to Republics which have slaves as well as to Empires which have serfs. Social problems overstep frontiers. The sores of the human race, those great sores which cover the globe, do not halt at the red or blue lines traced upon the map. In every place where man is ignorant and despairing, in every place where woman is sold for bread, wherever the child suffers for lack of the book which should instruct him and of the hearth which should warm him, the book of *Les Misérables* knocks at the door and says: "Open to me, I come for you."

At the hour of civilization through which we are now passing, and which is still so sombre, the *miserable's* name is Man; he is agonizing in all climes, and he is groaning in all languages.

Your Italy is no more exempt from the evil than is our France. Your admirable Italy has all miseries on the face of it. Does not banditism, that raging form of pauperism, inhabit your mountains? Few nations are more deeply eaten by that ulcer of convents which I have endeavored to fathom. In spite of your possessing Rome, Milan, Naples, Palermo, Turin, Florence, Sienna, Pisa, Mantua, Bologna, Ferrara, Genoa, Venice, a heroic history, sublime ruins, magnificent ruins, and superb cities, you are, like ourselves, poor. You are covered with marvels and vermin. Assuredly, the sun of Italy is splendid, but, alas, azure in the sky does not prevent rags on man.

Like us, you have prejudices, superstitions, tyrannies, fanaticisms, blind laws lending assistance to ignorant customs. You taste nothing of the present nor of the future without a

flavor of the past being mingled with it. You have a barbarian, the monk, and a savage, the lazzarone. The social question is the same for you as for us. There are a few less deaths from hunger with you, and a few more from fever; your social hygiene is not much better than ours; shadows, which are Protestant in England, are Catholic in Italy; but, under different names, the *vescovo* is identical with the *bishop*, and it always means night, and of pretty nearly the same quality. To explain the Bible badly amounts to the same thing as to understand the Gospel badly.

Is it necessary to emphasize this? Must this melancholy parallelism be yet more completely verified? Have you not indigent persons? Glance below. Have you not parasites? Glance up. Does not that hideous balance, whose two scales, pauperism and parasitism, so mournfully preserve their mutual equilibrium, oscillate before you as it does before us? Where is your army of schoolmasters, the only army which civilization acknowledges?

Where are your free and compulsory schools? Does every one know how to read in the land of Dante and of Michael Angelo? Have you made public schools of your barracks? Have you not, like ourselves, an opulent war-budget and a paltry budget of education? Have not you also that passive obedience which is so easily converted into soldierly obedience? military establishment which pushes the regulations to the extreme of firing upon Garibaldi; that is to say, upon the living honor of Italy? Let us subject your social order to examination, let us take it where it stands and as it stands, let us view its flagrant offences, show me the woman and the child. It is by the amount of protection with which these two feeble creatures are surrounded that the degree of civilization is to be measured. Is prostitution less heartrending in Naples than in Paris? What is the amount of truth that springs from your laws, and what amount of justice springs from your tribunals? Do you chance to be so fortunate as to be ignorant of the meaning of those gloomy words: public prosecution, legal infamy, prison, the scaffold, the executioner, the death penalty? Italians, with you as with us, Beccaria is dead and Farinace is alive. And then, let us scrutinize your state reasons. Have you a government which comprehends the identity of morality and politics? You have reached the point where you grant amnesty to heroes! Something very similar has been done in France. Stay, let us pass miseries in review, let each one contribute his pile, you are as

rich as we. Have you not, like ourselves, two condemnations, religious condemnation pronounced by the priest, and social condemnation decreed by the judge? Oh, great nation of Italy, thou resemblest the great nation of France! Alas! our brothers, you are, like ourselves, *Miserables*.

From the depths of the gloom wherein you dwell, you do not see much more distinctly than we the radiant and distant portals of Eden. Only, the priests are mistaken. These holy portals are before and not behind us.

I resume. This book, *Les Misérables*, is no less your mirror than ours. Certain men, certain castes, rise in revolt against this book,—I understand that. Mirrors, those revealers of the truth, are hated; that does not prevent them from being of use.

As for myself, I have written for all, with a profound love for my own country, but without being engrossed by France more than by any other nation. In proportion as I advance in life, I grow more simple, and I become more and more patriotic for humanity.

This is, moreover, the tendency of our age, and the law of radiance of the French Revolution; books must cease to be exclusively French, Italian, German, Spanish, or English, and become European, I say more, human, if they are to correspond to the enlargement of civilization.

Hence a new logic of art, and of certain requirements of composition which modify everything, even the conditions, formerly narrow, of taste and language, which must grow broader like all the rest.

In France, certain critics have reproached me, to my great delight, with having transgressed the bounds of what they call “French taste”; I should be glad if this eulogium were merited.

In short, I am doing what I can, I suffer with the same universal suffering, and I try to assuage it. I possess only the puny forces of a man, and I cry to all: “Help me!”

This, sir, is what your letter prompts me to say; I say it for you and for your country. If I have insisted so strongly, it is because of one phrase in your letter. You write:—

“There are Italians, and they are numerous, who say: ‘This book, *Les Misérables*, is a French book. It does not concern us. Let the French read it as a history, we read it as a romance.’”—Alas! I repeat, whether we be Italians or Frenchmen, misery concerns us all. Ever since history has been written, ever since philosophy has meditated, misery has

been the garment of the human race; the moment has at length arrived for tearing off that rag, and for replacing, upon the naked limbs of the Man-People, the sinister fragment of the past with the grand purple robe of the dawn.

If this letter seems to you of service in enlightening some minds and in dissipating some prejudices, you are at liberty to publish it, sir. Accept, I pray you, a renewed assurance of my very distinguished sentiments.

VICTOR HUGO.

